

Hand-Books
for
BIBLE CLASSES
in Primary Schools.

ST JOHN'S GOSPEL
with Introduction and Notes

Rev George Reith MA

CHAPS. I-VIII

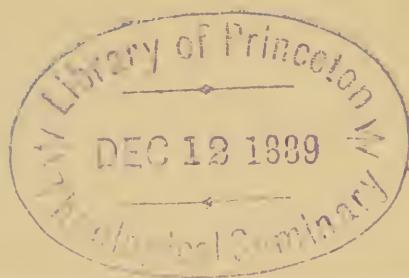


R2

v.1

1870. 12mo.

6 T. CLARK.



BS 417 .H36 v.13
Reith, George.

The Gospel according to St.
John

Handbooks for Bible Classes and Private Students.

EDITED BY
REV. PROFESSOR MARCUS DODS, D.D.,
AND
REV. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.

NOW READY.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS. By JAMES MACGREGOR, D.D.,
late of New College, Edinburgh. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE POST-EXILIAN PROPHETS. With Introductions and Notes. By
Rev. Prof. MARCUS DODS, D.D. *Price 2s.*

A LIFE OF CHRIST. By Rev. JAMES STALKER, M.A. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE SACRAMENTS. By Rev. Professor CANDLISH, D.D. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES. By Rev. Professor MURPHY, LL.D.,
Belfast. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH. By Rev. JOHN MACPHERSON, M.A.,
Findhorn. *Price 2s.*

THE BOOK OF JUDGES. By Rev. Principal DOUGLAS, D.D. *Price 1s. 3d.*

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA. By Rev. Principal DOUGLAS, D.D. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. By Rev. Professor DAVIDSON,
D.D., Edinburgh. *Price 2s. 6d.*

SCOTTISH CHURCH HISTORY. By Rev. N. L. WALKER, D.D. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE CHURCH. By Rev. Prof. BINNIE, D.D., Aberdeen. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE REFORMATION. By Rev. Professor LINDSAY, D.D. *Price 2s.*

THE BOOK OF GENESIS. By Rev. Prof. MARCUS DODS, D.D. *Price 2s.*

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. By Rev. Principal BROWN, D.D.,
Aberdeen. *Price 2s.*

PRESBYTERIANISM. By Rev. JOHN MACPHERSON, M.A. *Price 1s. 6d.*

LESSONS ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By Rev. WM. SCRUMGEOUR,
Glasgow. *Price 2s. 6d.*

THE SHORTER CATECHISM. By Rev. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.,
Edinburgh. *Price 2s. 6d.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK. By Rev. Professor
LINDSAY, D.D., Glasgow. *Price 2s. 6d.*

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS. By GEORGE SMITH,
LL.D., F.R.G.S. *Price 2s. 6d.*

A LIFE OF ST. PAUL. By Rev. JAMES STALKER, M.A. *Price 1s. 6d.*

PALESTINE. With Maps. By Rev. ARCH. HENDERSON, M.A.,
Crieff. *Price 2s. 6d.*

[Continued on next page.]

HANDBOOKS FOR BIBLE CLASSES.

THE BOOK OF ACTS. By Rev. Professor LINDSAY, D.D. Two Parts.
Price 1s. 6d. each.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. By Rev. Professor CANDLISH, D.D. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE SUM OF SAVING KNOWLEDGE. By Rev. JOHN MACPHERSON, M.A., Findhorn. *Price 1s. 6d.*

HISTORY OF THE IRISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. By Rev. THOMAS HAMILTON, D.D., Belfast. *Price 2s.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE. By Rev. Professor LINDSAY, M.A., D.D. Part I., *price 2s.* Part II., *price 1s. 3d.*

THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES AND THE CONCLUSIONS OF SCIENCE. By Rev. W. D. THOMSON, M.A., Lochend. *Price 2s.*

BUTLER'S THREE SERMONS ON HUMAN NATURE. With Introduction and Notes. By Rev. T. B. KILPATRICK, B.D. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD. By Professor CANDLISH, D.D. *Price 1s. 6d.*

THE BOOK OF EXODUS. By JAMES MACGREGOR, D.D., late of New College, Edinburgh. Two Parts. *Price 2s. each.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN. By Rev. GEORGE REITH, M.A., Glasgow. Two Parts. *Price 2s. each.*

IN PREPARATION.

THE SABBATH. By Rev. Professor SALMOND, D.D., Aberdeen.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. By Rev. Prof. MARCUS DODS, D.D.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. By Rev. Principal DAVID BROWN, D.D., Aberdeen.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. By Rev. JAMES MELLIS, M.A., Southport.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS. By Rev. SIMEON R. MACPHAIL, M.A., Liverpool.

CHURCH AND STATE. By A. TAYLOR INNES, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS. By Rev. Professor LINDSAY, D.D., Glasgow.

APOLOGETICS. By Rev. Professor IVERACH, M.A., Aberdeen.

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN. By Rev. Professor CANDLISH, D.D.

ISAIAH. By Rev. Professor ELMSLIE, D.D., London.

I. and II. PETER, and JUDE. By Rev. WM. PATRICK, B.D., Kirkin-tilloch.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST. By Rev. JAMES MACGREGOR, D.D.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN. By Rev. Professor CANDLISH, D.D.

THE MINOR PROPHETS. By Rev. Principal DOUGLAS, D.D.

✓
HANDBOOKS
FOR
BIBLE CLASSES
AND PRIVATE STUDENTS.

EDITED BY
REV. PROF. MARCUS DODS, D.D.,
AND
REV. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN
BY REV. GEORGE REITH, M.A.

PART FIRST.

EDINBURGH:
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET

PRINTED BY MORRISON AND GIBB,

FOR

T. & T. CLARK, EDINBURGH.

LONDON, HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

DUBLIN, GEORGE HERBERT.

NEW YORK, SCRIBNER AND WELFORD.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
S T. J O H N,
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

PART I.

CHAPTERS I. TO VIII. VER. II.

BY
REV. GEORGE REITH, M.A.,
GLASGOW.

EDINBURGH :
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

C O N T E N T S.

—o—

INTRODUCTION.

	P A G E
I. LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE JOHN,	xi
II. AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL,	xxi
1. External Evidence,	xxi
2. Internal Evidence,	xxv
III. PLACE AND TIME OF COMPOSITION,	xxviii
IV. OBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE GOSPEL,	xxx
V. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS,	lv
PLAN AND ARRANGEMENT,	lx

C O M M E N T A R Y.

P A R T I.

I. THE PROLOGUE—THE WORD IN HIS ETERNAL BEING— SELF-REVELATION IN CREATION, IN CONSCIENCE, IN REASON, AND IN FLESH FOR MAN'S REDEMPTION, i. 1-18,	I
II. THE HISTORY OF CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION OF HIS GLORY AS THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON,	16
A.—IN PUBLIC, i. 19-XII.,	16
1. The Baptist's Testimony, i. 19-36,	16
2. Call of the first Disciples, i. 37-51,	28
3. First Manifestation at Cana in private, ii. 1-11, .	35
4. Second Manifestation at Jerusalem in public, ii. 12-25,	39

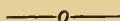
	PAGE
5. Christ and Three different Types of Character. (a) The Pharisee and Member of Sanhedrim, iii. 1-21. (b) The Samaritan Woman, iv. 1-42. (c) The Herodian Courtier, iv. 43-54. With the Interlude of the Baptist's Final Testimony, iii. 22-end,	44
6. The Conflict begins. Jesus cures an impotent man in Jerusalem—Proclaims Himself the Son in relation to the Father—Is rejected by the Jews, ch. v.,	74
7. Jesus feeds 5000 men in Galilee—Proclaims Him- self the Bread of Life in relation to men—Is rejected by the Galileans, ch. vi.,	94
8. The Conflict deepens—Jesus at the feasts of Taber- nacles and Dedication—Divided sentiment— The Cleavage becoming more pronounced—He declares Himself the Water of Life, the Light of the World, and the Good Shepherd—Cures the man born blind, chs. vii.-x.,	120

INTRODUCTION

TO

ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

THE GOSPEL BY JOHN.



INTRODUCTION.

I. LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE JOHN.

JOHN was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee (Matt. iv. 21; Mark i. 19), and of his wife Salome (Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1), who was, probably, a sister of Mary, the mother of the Lord (cp. Mark xv. 40 with John xix. 25); so that Jesus and John were first cousins. From the fact that, in all the passages where he and his brother James are mentioned, James stands first: “James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother” (except Luke ix. 28), it is inferred that he was the younger of the two, possibly also the more retiring in disposition. The father was in partnership with Simon and Andrew (Luke v. 10), the sons of Jonah; and the allusion to “hired servants” (Mark i. 20), taken in connection with the mention of Salome among the women who ministered to Jesus in Galilee (Mark xv. 40 f., and cp. Luke viii. 2 f.), and with the casual remark of John himself (xviii. 15), that he was acquainted with the high priest, would suggest easy circumstances. The lake abounds in fish, and though there is no trade and no fishing to speak of at the present day, in those times the industry was active and lucrative. “Pickled in barrels, the fish were sent far and wide” (Hausrath). It is not expressly said that Bethsaida was the town in which the family resided; but as it was the “city of Andrew and Peter” (i. 44, see xii. 21), they likely lived either in it or near it. The brothers were fishermen, like their father before them; in this life of patient toil that gave ample scope for quiet thought, and in a home where the best traditions of Israelitic piety

flourished, John's early days were spent. He enjoyed, besides, one of the greatest educating powers a youth can have exercised on him, the blessing of friendship, and friendship with a man of the hearty and honest build of Simon, son of Jonah. Of Zebedee, the father, nothing is told us ; but the man who could give up at the call of Christ his two sons, already aiding and relieving him in his labour, cannot be regarded as among the least of those who made the path straight for their Redeemer. Of Salome, enough lies on the page of the record to justify the inference that her sons owed to their mother their profoundly impressible nature. She was a woman capable of enthusiasm and deep devotion, with an earnest aggressive character, touched with that idealism which on the one side may have the coarse fibre of ambition, but on the other side may have susceptibility to higher calls and aims. From the mother, James derived that self-forgetful ardour which resulted in his gaining, first of the twelve, the martyr's crown ; and John—that intensity and passion of nature which caused him to be absorbed in the object of his love and loyalty.

In connection with Christ's choice of Galileans for His disciples, it may be added that two conditions obtained at that time in Galilee, the one political, the other religious, which must have affected, in some degree, the Jewish resident population. The nationality was of a very mixed type ; the commercial highway between Damascus and the south ran through the province, introducing foreigners and foreign pursuits. It was "Galilee of the Gentiles." The horizon of a Galilean Jew, therefore, was bound to be wider than that of his southern brothers. And then, on the religious side, their beliefs were altogether simpler, freer from traditionalism, less of the stereotyped order, than were the beliefs of their Judean fellow-countrymen. Their tolerance of Gentiles notwithstanding, they were enthusiastic for their own faith and hopes, and no more devoted pilgrims than those from the northern province frequented the great feasts at Jerusalem.

With the rest of His Bethsaida friends, a band of noble-minded youths, John was drawn to attach himself more or less closely to the Baptist when his ministry began. How deep and lasting was the

impression made on him by the preacher of repentance, we can learn from the vivid pages in the Gospel that record the Baptist's judgment of himself in relation to Christ ; and, above all, from the remarkable designation which he applied to Christ—"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" This conception of Christ clung to the Apostle's mind and influenced his whole Christian doctrine. It was through that declaration of the Baptist, when he pointed out Jesus as He walked on the banks of the Jordan, that John was first attracted to the Saviour. When an old man, the scene lived in all its details in his memory. There can be no doubt that he was himself the unnamed disciple who, along with Andrew, followed Jesus, and at His invitation spent the day in His company. He tells the hour when he first stood in his Lord's presence and spoke to Him. He does not tell us about the interview that followed, or the way in which the conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus dawned on his mind, the conviction expressed presently by Andrew, when he first found his own brother Simon and said—"We have found the Messias!" But it is significant at least that in his Gospel the superiority to miracles of the evidencing power of Christ's words should be much insisted on ; and that in it we should read of the secret manifestation of the Father and Son to the loving heart.

Like the rest of the disciples, John went back to his home and work. He was on the lake with his father and brother and their partners, Simon and Andrew, that eventful morning when Jesus appeared, preached to the people from the deck of Simon's boat, gave him the remarkable haul of fishes in his net, and then called him and the other three to follow Him. How long after the incident by the Jordan this second call took place we cannot say ; but it decided conclusively for John, as for the others, his future as a fisher of men, Matt. iv. 18 ff.; Mark i. 16 ff.; Luke v. 1-11. The ascendancy which Christ had already gained over these receptive youths is to be explained, however, not by the events of this morning, but by the events of those of that earlier time by the river Jordan.

Along with his brother James (whom, strangely enough, he never mentions in his Gospel) and Simon his friend, John was taken by Christ

into an inner circle of special confidence, so that he became a witness of remarkable circumstances in the Lord's life, such as the raising of the daughter of Jairus from death (Mark v. 37), the transfiguration scene (Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28), and the agony in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiv. 33). Mark (ix. 38 ff.) and Luke (ix. 49 f.) relate of him how, on one occasion having informed the Master that he had forbade one casting out devils in Jesus' name because he was not of their company, he had received rebuke from Christ instead of the praise which he expected. Luke (ix. 51 ff.) further tells of him and his brother, how they begged Christ's permission to call fire from heaven to consume a Samaritan village which would not give hospitality to them. And Matthew (xx. 20 ff.) and Mark (x. 35 ff.) give an account of the somewhat strange and bold request preferred by Salome on behalf of her two sons (no doubt consenting), that they should sit on the right and left hand of Christ in His glory,—a request redeemed from the charge of mere vulgar love of greatness by the emphatic affirmative with which the brothers immediately replied to the Lord's question—“Are ye able to drink of my cup?”

From these several incidents we should infer in John, not that gentle and mildly loving disposition with which he has been too often, and wrongly, credited, but an intense, vehement, and excitable temperament, which, if capable of passionate attachment to Christ, was apt to lead the disciple now into narrow partisanship, now into intolerant zeal, and now into an ambition that ignored the claims of brother disciples. What such a disposition might have grown to, apart from the sanctifying touch of Christ on him, we may suppose. The electric spark of strong and fiery love, able to flash out and work havoc, was tamed, not quenched; so that the same man could write: “We know we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one;” and “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.” The man who prayed Christ for permission to revenge an insult could write: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer;” and the man who craved a place high over his fellow-disciples could write: “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

To John himself we are indebted for our knowledge that he was taken by our Lord even beyond the intimacy and affection common to the inner circle of three into a peculiarly tender relationship, which conferred on him the wonderful designation of the “Disciple whom Jesus loved” (xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2, xxi. 7, 20). It seems to be as natural that the aged Apostle should forbear to speak of himself directly, as it is that he should delight to recall the pre-eminent affection which his Lord bore to him, especially as the fact that the Divine Redeemer had a susceptibility for ordinary human friendship, and felt more drawn to one character than to another (while none could so entirely sympathize with all and interpret all), was one more proof of the reality of the humanity which He had adopted for His own. Perhaps the conception uppermost in the Apostle’s mind was quite as much the truth and tenderness of Christ’s human nature as the honour that marked himself out from the rest. Luke tells us how Jesus entrusted John and Peter with the duty of arranging for a chamber where to eat the Passover with His disciples before His death ; but it is from his own page that we know that John reclined on Christ’s bosom at the last supper (xiii. 23) ; that he was told privately who should be the traitor (ver. 26) ; that he and Simon turned and followed the Master when led away from the Garden of Gethsemane ; that, on the strength of his intimacy with the high priest, he gained admission to his official residence, and introduced his friend Simon, and was, therefore, a spectator both of Simon’s fall and of the trial of his Lord before the Jewish and Roman tribunals ; that, alone of the disciples, he stood among the women at the cross ; and that his Lord did him the honour of entrusting Mary His mother to his care ; and that he took her thence to his own home (xix. 25 ff.) ; and that, returning to Calvary, he was an eye-witness, if not of the closing scene itself, at least of the piercing of Christ’s body by the soldier, and of the blood and water that issued from the wound ; for the truth of which facts he gives a solemn personal guarantee (ver. 35). Further, in his graphic page we learn how Mary Magdalene brought the news to himself and Simon of the empty tomb ; how the two friends started off in haste ; how the

younger man outran the elder, and reaching the sepulchre stooped down and looked in, and saw the linen clothes lying ; how Simon entered the sepulchre, and after him John ; and how they drew their own conclusion that their Lord was risen (xx. 2 ff.). And lastly, he tells us of that memorable scene by the Lake of Galilee, where himself and six other disciples, impatient of the Lord's delay, on Simon's instigation, had gone to fish ; how Jesus appeared after a night's profitless toil, repeated His first miracle on that lake (Luke v.), and was recognised first by John himself ; and he concludes his Gospel by recording Christ's rebuke to Simon for wishing to know the future of his friend.

After Christ's ascension, the record of John's doings in the pages of the New Testament is meagre. He appears with Peter in Jerusalem at the Temple (Acts iii. 1) ; goes down with him to Samaria, and returns (Acts viii. 14, 25). When Paul went up to Jerusalem, on the occasion of his second visit after his conversion, he mentions that John with James and Cephas—"pillars of the Church"—gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (Gal. ii. 9). And this is the last we read of him in the inspired page. We know that John left Jerusalem and took up his residence at Ephesus, where he laboured, and where he died. But how long he remained in Jerusalem, and whether he went direct to Ephesus, there are no materials to show. If the silence of the record in Acts xxi. is to be taken as proof that John was no longer in Jerusalem when Paul was arrested,—the fact being certain that he could not have been in Ephesus a few months before, when Paul delivered his farewell address to the elders of that Church,—it would follow that the Apostle had left the former city and had gone whither no one knows. But the argument from silence is unreliable. It is generally supposed that the care of Mary bound him more or less to his native home, and that possibly it was after her death, and when Paul had received the martyr's crown, and the inevitable doom of Jerusalem had become apparent to him, that he withdrew from that city. His quiet life of prayer and contemplation ; his thoughts ever going back to what he had seen, and heard, and handled of the Word of Life,—were preparing him for his great work

in Ephesus. For long, like the other disciples, he must have hoped that his Lord would come again ; and he may have lingered on in Jerusalem, often wondering, probably, what distinctive apostolic office he had himself to fulfil, until it became clear to him that the finger of Providence was beckoning him away to take charge of those rapidly rising churches planted by Paul in the important centres of Asia Minor, now the focus, in fact, of Christian life and activity.

He came to Ephesus at one of the great turning-points in the history of the Church. Paul had torn the faith of Christ out from its Jewish swaddling-bands, and asserted a place for it in the very citadel of heathen culture, commerce, and idolatry. But it was confronted now with the philosophy and religious speculations of that great seething Greek world where East and West mingled their streams ; and it was reserved for the Apostle—who not only had seen and heard the Saviour of men, but who for thirty years and more had opportunity, as few or none besides had, to ponder in comparative retirement the significance of that manifestation of the Divine life with which he and his brother Apostles had been blessed—to bring the harvest of that long meditation, and put the crown on Paul's teaching, by showing how the faith of Christ was faith in Him who was and is the Eternal Word of God, the light and life of men.

The undeniable presence and influence of John in Ephesus, as uniformly testified to by Church tradition, as well as by the indirect evidence of his Gospel and Epistles, has no contemporary historic record. If the book of Revelation be from his hand, then we must believe that at one period, under persecution, he was exiled to Patmos ; and also that the seven Churches of Asia were under his pastoral care. Where history fails, tradition is busy. He flies from a bath in case the roof might fall, because Cerinthus, the heretic, was under it at the same time. He wins back a notable bandit,—in early years a disciple of his own,—suffered to lapse by one to whom he had been entrusted. He is carried in the arms of friends into the Christian assemblies, when physical capacity is almost gone, and utters the same words again and again, “ Little children, love one another.” On being asked, “ Master, why always this admonition ? ” he answers,

“Because it is the Lord’s commandment, and if only this be done it is enough.” All accounts are unanimous in their testimony that John lived to an advanced age, and that he died a peaceful death at Ephesus ; but conjectures as to date range as widely as from 90 A.D. to 120 A.D. In consequence of the Lord’s question of rebuke to Simon Peter, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?” we are informed by John himself (xxi.) of a widespread opinion that he was to be spared until Christ’s second coming ; and he is at pains to give the exact words which Jesus used on that occasion, in order to show that this belief had no foundation in fact.

John gave himself over with a passion of devotion to his Master. Having once done so, the Master was all in all. His heart closed round its object, leaving no room for lesser love. His fellowship with Christ was one long sustained contemplation of Him. We read little of what he said or did during the Lord’s ministry. He saw, he heard, he observed the Master only. Signs of an invisible glory hid from others were detected by his eye and ear. Simon Peter, his friend, loved Christ, but Simon never lost consciousness of himself ; it was always the Master and he. John, like Mary of Bethany, lost sense of all, even of himself, in the thought of the Lord he loved ; there streamed forth constantly for him a ray of the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Again, there was in John an uncompromising simplicity of view. To him there were but two sides—light and darkness, truth and the lie, love and hate, life and death, the Son revealing the Father, and the devil. The believing man has life, and knows it ; dwells in an atmosphere, not of uncertainty, but of love and joyous confidence. He prays, and receives whatever he asks. He knows he is of God, and that the whole world lieth in the wicked one. We can therefore understand from this how the disciple who was the special object of Christ’s affection should fail in offering points of attractiveness to men in general. He could not, like Paul, make himself all things to all men. Men never appealed to him, “I am of John,” as they did to Paul and Peter. Paul’s spirit was all-embracing ; his charities and sympathies overflowed every barrier of

condition or circumstance. Peter, too, had lively impulses, and was impressionable. But John was intense, and lacking in wide sympathies ; dwelling apart on his lonely mountain-top of insight into the person and glory of his Lord ; inviting, indeed, men up to the height where he stood himself, but unable to go down, as Paul did, and help and encourage the strugglers to toil up the steep slopes of communion with God. To him the one real thing was God and His love in Christ : the world was a vanishing dream. Life meant to have the Son, and to abide in the Son and in the Father, and it meant nothing else. Hence, perhaps, the designation by which he was distinguished, *Theologos* = the theologian or divine (attached in our English Bibles to the title of the Apocalypse).

It is often said that the types of Christianity according to Peter and Paul, namely, *hope* and *faith*, have successively ruled the world ; but that the type of Christianity according to John, namely, *love*, has yet to assert its pre-eminence. Perhaps so ; but it is well to remember that the *love* of which John stands representative is not that of a gentle feminine character, it is that of a son of thunder ; it is the love which, sure of its object as the supreme and only Lord of the affections, abandons itself entirely to Him ; suffers nothing, no form of beauty, or of strength, or of greatness, to come into rivalry with Him ; sees a stain on all the pomp and pride of man besides : "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The ideals to which this Apostle would raise men are : a walk in love and light with God the Father through the Son, as if there were no other objects but God and our own souls, fellowship with Him being fellowship with all the sons of God besides, and an infallible assurance that truth and life are in Jesus Christ.

One thing besides ; no man, no character is perfect without discipline. An Apostle is no exception to the rule. John learned much from personal fellowship with Christ ; he learned much also from the Holy Spirit, and from the conditions in which his Lord willed to set his life for many years. We have to reflect on all that John would learn from his tender solicitude for the mother of his Lord, while she

was spared ; the chastening of his vehement nature ; putting on a touch of softness and thoughtfulness for others ; taking him out of himself, and so preparing him for the teaching of that love of man—fruit of the love of God in Christ—which marked his closing years. Even Apostles learned, by the gradual teaching of Word and Spirit, to correct their defects, and supplement their partial views, and rise to the stature of Christ's manhood. And so, after that long training in the school of restraint of personal liberty, while occupied with his constant ministry to Mary, for Christ's sake and her own, John was sent to watch over the Churches of Asia Minor, and to teach them the chastened and mature result of his life, and prayer, and thought : “This commandment have we received of Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.”

(The surname *Boanerges*—sons of thunder—was applied by Jesus to James and John, according to Mark iii. 17, the only passage where the designation occurs. It has been suggested by some that the name presents the harmful effects of thunder and lightning as the point of comparison, and would imply therefore somewhat of blame, for which justification is sought in the incidents recorded in Mark ix. and Luke ix. But it is scarcely possible to conceive that Jesus would permanently associate a surname, which would be rather a by-name, with two chief Apostles, and for a single failure of the Christian temper. It would stand in glaring contrast in that case with the surname of Simon (Kephas—Peter), which, representing the ideal man, the man as Christ's loving and wise eye saw him in Simon, became the aim of Simon's daily aspiration, that he might at last verify it. *Boanerges* would, on the contrary, be an appellation to live *down*. It is perhaps strange that neither Matthew nor Luke mentions the circumstance ; but, on the whole, it is better to believe, as the early Gospel interpreters did, that the designation was meant, as that of Peter was meant, to stand for the ideal character in the brothers, the intense, vehement, impetuous self-devotion, which, as purified by fellowship with Christ, was verified and exemplified in James' early martyrdom, and in John's remarkable legacy of thought to the Church. For a full note on this name see Dr. James

Morison on *Mark*, p. 75. He is inclined to ascribe the reference to some “deep-toned peculiarity of voice,” characteristic of the brothers, fitting them to address men with “awe-inspiring effect.”)

II. AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL

1. *External Evidence.*

The author is not directly mentioned in the Gospel, but in xxi. 20 and 24 he is identified with the disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast at the last supper, and whom Jesus loved—the intimate friend of Simon Peter.

It is agreed on all hands, says Westcott, that the Gospel was written at a late date, towards the close of the first century. On the other hand, Abbott maintains that though some of the *doctrine* of the Fourth Gospel, expressed in words similar to the words of the Fourth Gospel, was probably current in Ephesus towards the end of the first half of the second century, yet it was not by that time widely, if at all, used as an authoritative document (*Encycl. Brit.* “Gospels”). It is not impossible that, with some limitations, both these positions are true,—if we omit, *e.g.*, the words “if at all” from the latter statement,—in which case the currency of the doctrine of John's Gospel would naturally arise from the teaching of that Gospel itself,—a Gospel which, in the very nature of the case, would not circulate so freely as the other three.

Towards the end of the second century we have explicit and unanimous testimonies to John's authorship; and from the middle of the second century we may infer that the Gospel was generally known and received as of apostolic origin and weight. This leaves a gap of more than half a century to be filled up, during which it is admitted that the evidences of the existence and use of the Gospel are not direct, or absolutely conclusive. Yet they are of importance; and it is impossible to suppose that the Church of the close of the second century, and onwards, should have accepted the Gospel as authentic unless the testimony were continuous and satisfactory.

1. In the earliest writing,—the “TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES,”—which may be earlier than most of the books of the New Testament, and is not later than the early quarter of the second century, we cannot expect to find much, if any, reference to this Gospel ; but we have the expressions, “Holy Father ;” “The holy vine of Thy child David ;” “Thou blessedst us with spiritual food, and drink, and eternal life through Thy child.” “Much of the spirit of the injunction had its origin in a community perfectly familiar with Johannine teaching such as we have it in the Gospel” (Reynolds, *Introduction*).

2. The testimony of the Apostolic Fathers is perhaps as clear as could be expected. POLYCARP of Smyrna (martyred about 155 A.D., according to Lightfoot), the disciple of John, quotes from his First Epistle, or, at least, adopts the thought of a passage (1 John iv. 3), when he writes (*Phil. ch. vii.*) : “Every one who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is Antichrist ; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is of the devil.” The evidence for the Epistle is, at the same time, evidence for the Gospel.

In IGNATIUS of Antioch (martyred not later than 116 A.D.) we read : “There is within me a water that liveth and speaketh, saying to me inwardly, Come to the Father. I have no delight in corruptible food, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, . . . and I desire the drink of God, namely, His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life” (*Epistle to the Romans*, ch. vii.). Cp. John iv. 14 and vi. 32, 33, 54, etc.

3. PAPIAS of Hierapolis (between 110 and 140 A.D.), a fellow-student of Polycarp, and who *may* have been a hearer of John himself, according to Eusebius, quoted testimonies from the First Epistle of John, and he places the name of John, in enumerating the Apostles, next to Matthew, linking the two evangelists together. According to Irenæus (v. 36), the elders or presbyters of Asia Minor gave a certain interpretation of John xiv. 1 : “In my Father’s house are many mansions,” which he quotes. If Papias were not the particular

presbyter, which is likely, he was at least one of the number. "The conclusions we draw are, that his (Papias') past acquaintance with John and Polycarp gives extraordinary importance to the testimony which Irenæus bears to the Gospel as well as to him, and connects the apostolic period with that in which the quotations from, and admissions of, John's Gospel are abundant, indubitable, and universally conceded" (Reynolds).

4. The FRAGMENT OF MURATORI, a Latin mutilated MS. on the Canon (dating not later than 170 A.D.), according to Westcott (*Canon of the N. T.*), probably part of a dialogue with some heretic, or a collection of pieces from a larger whole, gives the fourth place among the Gospels to that of John, a "disciple of the Lord," and relates the occasion of its composition thus: John, having at last yielded to the entreaties of his fellow-disciples, begged them to fast with him for three days, and whatever might be revealed to any of them should be told. On that night it was revealed to Andrew the Apostle that John should narrate all things in his own name, all aiding him with revision. . . .

5. TATIAN, a disciple of Justin (160-170 A.D.), in his *Discourse to the Greeks*, quotes clearly from i. 3, 5, and iv. 24. His "Diatessaron," or Harmony of the Gospels, is believed, on good grounds, to have been constructed from texts of the four Gospels (see Reynolds).

6. JUSTIN MARTYR (martyred 166 A.D.) has numerous allusions to what he calls the "Memoirs of the Apostles," which may be taken to be substantially the existing canonical Gospels. He says: "And he (the Baptist) cried to them, I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying; for He that is stronger than I shall come" (*Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 88). Cp. John i. 23, 27. Again, "For Christ also said, Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs is manifest to all" (*Apol.* i. 61). Cp. John iii. 3-5. Again, "Whoso heareth me heareth Him that sent me" (*Apol.* i. 16). Cp. John v. 24, xii. 44. Again, "They know not the Father nor the Son" (*Apol.* i. 63). Cp. John viii. 19, xvi. 3. Further, Justin's allusions to the doctrine of the Logos

afford, possibly, the clearest evidence of his knowledge of the Gospel. He says : "I have already proved that He (Jesus Christ) was the Only-begotten of the Father of all things, being begotten, in a peculiar manner, Word and Power by Him" (*Trypho*, 105). Cp. John i. 14. Again, "Jesus Christ is the only proper Son who has been begotten by God, being His Word and first-begotten and Power, and becoming man according to His will," etc. (*Apol.* i. 23). It is admitted that Justin never quotes the Gospel explicitly in connection with this doctrine of the Logos ; but without the Gospel any other sources from which he could have drawn would not have explained his own position ; so that while he indulges in speculations that are alien to the evangelist, it does not seem too much, on the whole, to say : "Justin's writings presuppose the use of John's Gospel more or less distinctly. He must, at least, have lived in a circle in which the Gospel had already become effective and influential. Without this presupposition the relation of many passages of his writings to John would be inexplicable" (Lücke).

7. Lastly, THEOPHILUS of Antioch (170-180) quotes the Gospel expressly by name ; and when we come to the times of IRENÆUS (pupil of Polycarp), CLEMENT of Alexandria, and TERTULLIAN, we are on solid ground. At the close, and before it, of the second century the proof of the existence of the Fourth Gospel, and of the uniform belief that John was the author, is irrefragable. It may be also added that such use of the Gospel was made by the Gnostic Valentinus and his school in the first half of the second century as to amount to undeniable evidence that the Fourth Gospel was held to be of apostolic authority, and justification was sought in its teaching, especially about the Logos, for the peculiar tenets of that heresy. "We have no absolutely contemporaneous witnesses. But the imperfect testimony of the second century, and the perfect testimony from the beginning of the third, make good and supplement each other, and reach almost to the time when the Gospel was written and first known in the Church. No other Gospel, hardly even a single Pauline Epistle, enjoys a greater unanimity and continuity of testimony" (Lücke).

2. Internal Evidence.

Three passages in the Gospel bear *direct* testimony that the author was at least an eye-witness of the Lord, if not an Apostle. The first is in i. 14, "We beheld His glory." The second is in xix. 35, "He that saw it bare record." And the third is in the epilogue, xxi. 24, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true." Even if this last be from another hand than that of the author himself, it is not only a guarantee for the truth of the narrative, but it must date at least from the time of the very first readers of the Gospel, so as to afford an almost unambiguous witness that the Apostle John is the author. The usual line taken by apologists in the *indirect* evidence is to adduce proofs from the Gospel that the writer was first a Jew, then a Jew of Palestine, then an eye-witness, then an Apostle, and last, by a process of exhaustion, the Apostle John. The language is Greek, but it reveals the soul of a Hebrew. The vocabulary is poor, but rich in profound expressions familiar to the Old Testament; the sentences are arranged with an artless simplicity, and bound to each other by inner connection of thought rather than by the usual laws of construction; the book is full of imagery and of symbolic terms, and of the parallelism characteristic of Hebrew poetry; and Old Testament conceptions are predominant. One of the chief themes of the book is the proof that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. He is presented as the fulfilment of such Old Testament types as the Passover Lamb, the Temple, the Brazen Serpent, the Manna, the Water and the Guiding Light of the Desert. Compare also the allegories of the Good Shepherd and the True Vine. Christ's rejection by "His own," its reason, and its prediction by their Scripture, form one main line of the argument. Old Testament ideas are the foundation on which the building is raised, and a Jewish consciousness is betrayed throughout, as such passages disclose, "Salvation is of the Jews," "Search the Scriptures," "The Scriptures cannot be broken," "Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," "These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled." "The law" is treated as

none but a Jew could have treated it, and the description of "the Jews" indicates the same conclusion (Westcott and Godet, *Introductions*). The author is perfectly familiar with Jewish observances and sentiment ; he knows all about their feasts, and alludes to various subordinate points in their law ; gives an accurate portraiture of the state of parties, and explains both Hebrew terms and Jewish customs as only one could do who was conversant with both, and was writing for a circle of Greek readers (cp. ii. 6, xix. 40, etc.). Further, his precise and minute acquaintance with the land, as well as with the people, the numerous local references and outward connections of Christ's life with persons and places, prove that the author was not only a Jew, but a Jew of Palestine (cp. iii. 23, iv. 4, 5, 9, 20, v. 2, xi. 18, xviii. 1, xix. 13, 17, 41, etc.). As Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans before the book was written, the exact knowledge of the various spots in the city implied in several of the above quoted passages is possible only on this assumption. And to this we add the knowledge of the Hebrew language (which at this time was quite exceptional among Jews abroad), proved both by the use of names like Enon, Bethesda, Kedron, and Siloam, and by the evident acquaintance with the Hebrew original of the Old Testament. That the book was written by an eye-witness of the events recorded, and by one who stood in a relation of great intimacy with Christ, lies clearly on the page. The author was a witness, not merely of the general historic manifestation of Christ (i. 14, and cp. i John i. 1), but of single incidents in His life ; he knows particulars about persons, times, places, events ; all of which might, of course, be an elaborate counterfeit ; but the natural impression made on the reader is that the writer is relating the things which he saw and heard with the simplicity of unconscious art, throwing in numerous touches that betray his truthfulness. Take such passages, *e.g.*, as these : i. 35, 39, ii. 1, iii. 2, iv. 6, 43, 52, vi. 16, 22 f., xi. 6, 17, xii. 1, xiii. 4, 23, 30, xix. 26, xx. 1 ff., etc. And to the precision of detail in incidental circumstances we must add the vivid and lively narrative, the insight into the motives and very heart of Jesus, and the close acquaintance with His disciples and friends disclosed in a variety of simple touches,

proving means and power of accurate observation, and intimacy. In no other Gospel are we brought into such contact with the men and women who stood round the Lord, or are able to form so clear an estimate of their characters, *e.g.* Simon, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Judas, Thomas, and Mary Magdalene. And the same applies to the other individuals introduced in the course of the narrative : Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the man born blind ; above all, Pilate, the delineation of whose character could only have come from the pen of one who had studied with intense interest every step in the great tragedy in which the Roman procurator played so conspicuous a part. In proof of these statements, we might adduce almost every page of the book, which, if not written by an eye-witness of the events, is the most remarkable piece of fictitious presentation ever invented. The induction is thus narrowed to the conclusion that the author must have been an Apostle, and that Apostle, John, the son of Zebedee. He knows all about the call of the first disciples ; knows their feelings and thoughts about the Master on many occasions when no stranger could have had access to them ; knows what took place at secret interviews, of which chs. iii. and iv. give us instances ; knows what was said and done on the last night Jesus spent with the disciples ; and reveals the most complete knowledge of, and sympathy with, the Lord's action and utterance. And if an Apostle, who but John ? For why is not he of all the disciples mentioned by name ? Why not he, who belonged to the inner circle of three ? Why should the writer have carefully abstained from ever calling him by name ; never designating him more specifically than one of the sons of Zebedee, xxi. 2 ? And who was that disciple "whom Jesus loved ;" who leaned on His breast at the last supper ; who asked privately the name of the traitor ; who was an eye-witness of the trial before Pilate ; who stood beside the cross, and had the honour of being entrusted with the care of the mother of the Lord ; who saw Christ's body pierced by the soldier ; who ran along with Simon Peter, an intimate friend, to the sepulchre on the eventful morning ; and was one of the seven disciples who went fishing on the Lake of Tiberias, and was the first to per-

ceive that the stranger who hailed them from the shore was their Lord,—surely no other than the writer of this book? Take also into account the fact that the Baptist is never spoken of here as in the other Gospels by the full designation “John Baptist,” but always as “John” simply, John the Apostle and Evangelist never being referred to in this direct way, and no reasonable doubt can be left in the unprejudiced mind that the writer is no other than John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee.

It has been alleged that the Galilean fisherman was incapable of producing such a writing, because it implies a familiarity with Greek philosophy inconceivable in his case. The point of this objection lies, in fact, in the application of the term *Logos* to the Son of God, to which reference is made elsewhere (page 7). But it may be said generally, that on the supposition of John being resident in Ephesus for some considerable time, and becoming more or less acquainted with the religious and philosophic speculations which were rife in that world, there appears to be every reason why we might expect him to meet the demands and questionings of the Greek—believing and unbelieving—with the presentation of his Lord as being that perfect utterance of God which the human mind was craving for. More than this implies of knowledge of the Alexandrian gnosis the Gospel of John does not contain. It is saturated with the thought of the Old Testament, only illumined by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. PLACE AND TIME OF COMPOSITION.

There is no direct indication in the book itself of the *place* of composition, but there are numerous indirect proofs that the author was writing for a circle of readers to whom Jewish customs and manners were not so familiar as to himself, and that he was at a distance from the scenes of Gospel history. Irenæus expressly states Ephesus as the place, and Jerome agrees; and early tradition, generally, is unanimous on the point. Indeed, the probabilities amount to certainty. If John was the author; if he resided in Ephesus for a long period, presiding over those Asian Churches

which Paul had founded, there can hardly be room for discussion. And, in fact, whatever view be taken of the authorship and of the time of writing, that the book emanates from within these Christian communities, of which Ephesus was the chief, all are practically at one. The question of *date* is not so easy to settle, with precision at least ; but, as has been already shown, the concurrence of testimony converges on the close of the first century. We do not know the exact date of John's death, possibly some time in the last decade of the century ; Irenæus placing it even in Trajan's reign, that is, after 98. If this is the limit in one direction, the year of the fall of Jerusalem, 70, must be the limit in the other, for the impression left on the reader is that the day of Judea was past. Tradition is indefinite ; and though, according to Irenæus, John's Gospel was the latest of all the canonical books, as we have no fixed date for the publication of the other Gospels, we are still left in some uncertainty ; but it is a fair inference from ch. xxi. that Peter was already dead. One thing is unmistakeable—the character of the thought betrays a maturity and a range of the Christian consciousness which would have been impossible at an earlier stage of the Church ; which presuppose the existence of the first Gospels, as well as the work and Epistles of Paul. A condition of things is implied which could not have existed in the beginning of the apostolic age, because it indicates needs that were awakened by the preaching and teaching of the Apostles, by Paul especially ; in short, the Jewish period was past, and the world-wide Greek period with its own questionings had arrived. The Church was tossing, no longer on the limited sea of Jewish opposition, but on the great ocean of the world. If this appears to put the date too far forward, so as to be in danger of excluding it from the apostolic age, we have but to compare it, as Lücke reminds us, with the best of the Apostolic Fathers, to be conscious of the chasm between the two. Attempts to draw the date down into the second century prove their futility by the want of agreement among those who make them, by the variety of the dates assigned, and by the frequent changes which, under stress of conviction (changes always towards an earlier date), critics have felt it necessary

to make. We cannot therefore be far wrong in concluding that not long before the aged Apostle passed away, within a few years of the close of the first century, this record of his Lord's ministry saw the light,—the facts suffused, like an Alpine height bathed in the glory of the setting sun, with the reflection and experience of more than fifty years.

IV. OBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE GOSPEL.

In ch. xx. 30 f. the Evangelist thus states the object of his book : “Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that, believing, ye might have life through [in] His name.” From the numerous incidents furnished by the ministry of our Lord he had made a selection according to a definite plan, which had the aim of inspiring faith in Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God in the minds of the readers, and so of bringing them to obtain life in His name. When a writer lays before us his aim so explicitly, we must use it as a key to the understanding of the material selected, with its grouping, and the progress of the argument. We shall expect to find a unity and a symmetry in the structure ; the separate incidents not merely having a value of their own, but each contributing its own share to the proof. And this is precisely what we do find in John’s Gospel. In every chapter, in every particular incident, we can read the writer’s intention. This may not seem sufficiently to distinguish the Fourth Gospel from the other three. But the difference will be felt when it is remembered that the first three Gospels are collections of the most striking acts and words of the Lord Jesus, and accounts of His sufferings ; biographical sketches or traditions, more or less full, as the Evangelist had access to the original sources ; and, speaking roughly, they represent the early and current apostolic fashion of repeating reminiscences of their Master’s ministry as the rudimentary instruction in the Christian faith required. They are pieced together, of course, on a system—all follow the same general track, and two of them refer more or less fully to the circumstances

attending the birth of Jesus, and each has its own specific features. Essentially they are what the early Christian writers first called them—the memoirs of the ministry of our Lord, almost entirely the Galilæan ministry, gleaned from various sources, and filtered in each case through a characteristic medium.

John's Gospel is no compilation; it is his own work from beginning to end. He brings forward his own testimony, unlike the Synoptists; and it is not a biography or life of Christ, for it embraces only a period, in all of somewhere about thirty days, of which the great majority are spent in Judea. This Gospel is, in short, a theological treatise, founded on historical facts no doubt, yet to all intents and purposes a doctrinal work, in the course of which we are never permitted to be out of sight of the main scope of the writer. The first three simply state the incidents, allowing them to convey their own impression. John has fused together incidents and inferences, facts and doctrines, so that in place of having merely the history, you have the history and something more—the deep, spiritual significance of the history. To give an instance, the Sermon on the Mount is not narrated by Matthew in order to prove that the speaker is the Son of God, although that is a just inference from it; but in no discourse given by John are we allowed to escape that inference; it is directly pressed upon us, and we are made to feel that this “manifesting forth of the Divine glory” of the Saviour was the purpose of all He did and said. Besides, John in that wonderful introduction (ch. i. 1-18) briefly sums up his whole position, and gives the results of his long and intense reflection on the person and work of the Master he knew so well, and then he proceeds to submit to us the steps by which he built up such a sublime structure. That introduction is a digest of his book, and from the beginning therefore we have presented to us what is to be proved, the doctrine, namely, that in the man Christ Jesus there has been made a personal disclosure of the life of God by Him who ever has been the perfect expression of that life (the Word of God ever adequate to the Divine thought), and for the purpose of delivering men out of the darkness, which is spiritual alienation from God, that they may share His life, by bringing them

into a personal union with Himself through faith, and so to stand in the same relation of Sonship to the Eternal, and enjoy the spirit of Sonship which He, the Only-begotten in the bosom of the Father, enjoys. In Jesus Christ there is absolute truth, there is everlasting life, and there is the way to the Father.

It will be understood, therefore, why John calls the various incidents which he has recorded "signs." All, both words and deeds, were "signs"—signs of the glory of God which dwelt in Jesus. His words were not merely words of wisdom, or of authority, or of grace; they were the adequate expression of the Divine nature. They were "spirit and life." His works were not merely wonders, done to strike a curious crowd with awe, or momentary enthusiasm. John does not even deal largely with them, as the other three Evangelists do, on the side of their beneficence towards men. They are gleams from the Divine Spirit whom the Father had given to the Son without measure, the value of which lay, accordingly, in their relation to the nature of the Person who could do them, and the truth which they implied regarding Him. They bore witness that the Father had sent Him. Hence the whole activity of Jesus was a "sign"—sign of the Christhood which was His by office, as of the Divine Sonship which was His by nature. And in this light we can see how John contemplated the various events of His Master's earthly appearance. In Paul's theology the Incarnation stood as the sign of an unutterable condescension on the part of Him who, possessing the Divine glory on terms of full equality, made Himself of no reputation (Phil. ii.). But in John's theology it stands as the way by which He, who alone fully expresses God, declared Him to men,—the flesh, which the Word became, being as if the window opening upon the glory of the Infinite God. "The Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

In harmony with this view of the life and work of Jesus, John has written this Gospel, in which we are made to see how inestimably rich that life is as a disclosure of the unseen life of God; so rich, indeed, that the apparent exaggeration of the concluding verses is

justified when they affirm that even the world itself could not contain the books that might be written. That human life was short, its ministry very short, and the leading contents of it could soon be compressed into small compass. But, as a sign, it really is as inexhaustible as that of which it is the sign, namely, the limitless life of the Father, as declared in grace and truth to men. By a selection from what he knew as an eye-witness of the Word, John shows us what can be made even out of the few historic incidents he lays under contribution. Behind all was the Eternal Word, who filled common things full of meaning, and left wealth of inference in each saying and act. If Luke be an advance on Matthew and Mark, lifting the gospel of Jesus occasionally out of their lines, showing the application of literary and historic interest to the original sources, and affording an outlook on the riches of the actual life-history of Jesus, John is an incomparable advance even on Luke—advance from the simple, historic, and practical faith in Christ to the doctrinal import of His appearance, traversing an entirely new pathway, a pathway that leaves the temporary relations of men and things, and carries us away into the sphere of the unchanging and the abiding. The first three writers exhibit the aspect of the gospel to man as a child of time, with unverified prophecies, unfulfilled promises to make good, or with an intenseness of life in the present fugitive moment to make himself master of, or with aspirations for progress towards an ideal in the future to satisfy. John exhibits the aspect of the gospel to man as a child of eternity, to whom past, present, and future are all summed up in the consciousness of a relation to God through Christ Jesus that lifts the possessor of it out of the setting of common, limited human conditions, and puts him down as already in the life of God, that has neither beginning nor end. For “he that believeth on the Son of God *hath* everlasting life.” Nay, he has been given by the Father to the Son before the foundation of this perishing world, and he now is one with God in the Son, and his joy is full. Eternal life is already a present thing to him who knows the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent ; he has the life, and knows the truth, and walks in the light, and enjoys the love of God, which are opposed to the

death, and lie, and darkness, and hatred of the world, which is held by the wicked one.

In considering the way in which John affords proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, one or two points may be suggested. On the one hand, there are plain enough indications through this Gospel that its writer was familiar with the traditions of the Lord's ministry which are preserved in the first three records ; and, further, that he took for granted their acquaintance with them, to whom, or for whose sakes, he wrote his own book.¹ Again, as matter of fact, it is true that John affords, for the most part, different incidents of our Lord's ministry from those recorded in the first three Gospels, having only about a third part of his book occupied with events common to the others, and these chiefly in the account of the death and resurrection ; opening up a period, in short, about which the others are almost entirely silent. In this sense it may be correct enough to speak of the Fourth Gospel as supplementing the earlier popular records ; but though this is the consequence, it was not the design, and we are not justified in speaking of this Gospel as written merely, or chiefly, for the sake of giving omitted portions of the life and teaching of Jesus, any more than in finding its *motif* in the wish to refute prevalent heresies (Ebionite, Doketic, Gnostic), although undoubtedly these are directly refuted by the statement of truth in the Gospel. A tradition of the early Church, which seems to be in the main reliable, reports that, at the urgent request of his disciples at Ephesus, John, in his old age, undertook to furnish the Christians with an account of his Master's ministry, which should go deeper into the eternal and universal aspects of the Gospel than did the earlier narratives, and so should be more consonant with the necessities of the time, giving along with the other records that completer delineation of the Lord which the Church required to meet the varying demands made on it for the fulness of truth against error. In acceding to this request the Apostle has given a narrative differing in time, in scene, and in the form and substance of teaching from the other evangelists, and one

¹ This is a fair inference from the omission of the Temptation, the Transfiguration, and the Agony.

therefore which constitutes an invaluable addition, in fact, enabling us to ascertain the true duration¹ as well as the varied sides of the Lord's activity. And further, in giving what the early Church called a "spiritual" Gospel, that the basis of fact on which he grounds it should differ in many respects from that of the earlier writers, is due to the natural tendency of the early traditions preserved in the Synoptists, to pass over those points in the ministry of our Lord which needed a deeper understanding than at first was possible. This Fourth Gospel appeared, with its insight into the eternal significance and universal relations of the appearance of the Son of God in flesh, only after the Apostle Paul had leavened the Christian world with the far-reaching principles of the truth as he had been prepared by his own experience to preach them, and claimed, in fact, to have had them revealed to him by the Spirit. So that the Gospel by John must be read in the light of the Epistles of Paul, and also, and especially, of that to the Hebrews.²

And this leads to another remark. From many years' prayerful contemplation of the facts which had proved most suggestive to his own mind, with the aid of the Holy Spirit in his own inner experiences, in the emphatic teachings of the providences of God in the world and in the guidance of the Church, in accordance with the Lord's promise, he was led into the understanding of the many truths which the disciples could not bear when their Lord was still with them. This Fourth Gospel stands as perhaps the most convincing proof of the fulfilment of that promise. For it is the "Gospel of the Gospel." Many things had happened since their Lord had made that promise ; above all, Jerusalem had been razed to the ground, and the Jewish polity was no longer the centre out of which even the Jewish Christians

¹ From the mention of *three* Passover Feasts (ii. 3, vi. 4, xiii. 1) in the course of Christ's ministry, a duration of more than two years is likely. The only allusion in the Synoptists to a Passover before the last is Matt. xvii. 24.

² "The fourth Gospel represents a stage of the Universalism which goes beyond even the Pauline form, still showing traces of a freshly gained and even yet fought-for possession. . . . The traces of the violent emancipation of the newborn faith from the mother-religion are healed over. . . . Judaism has no longer a future." (Holzmann, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament.*)

were accustomed to regard the Gospel and the world. Christianity had entered the great world, and was exposed to the critical questionings of the subtle Greek mind. Doubts and difficulties had arisen which the earlier writings or traditions could not solve. The humble origin of the Saviour, the novelty of the Gospel, the opposition of the Jewish people to their own Messiah, with their subsequent calamitous fate, the ignominious death of Jesus, and the astounding fact of the resurrection ; and, in addition, the guarantee that men, who were confessedly unable at first to take in the true significance of their Master's life and teaching, had accurately reported the truth,—these and similar questions were now agitating the circles of believers and unbelievers alike. Under such conditions the account given by John of the ministry of his Master was bound to assume distinct features, very distinct as compared with the three narratives compiled while as yet the judgments foretold by the Lord on Jerusalem had not fallen on the unhappy city, and the Jewish nation were still invited, as a nation, to claim their birthright in the mercy of the gospel ; and while as yet men had not begun to raise searching inquiries as to the historic connection and foundation of the life of Jesus, and its essential meaning. This fact is one of the guiding clues through the pages of John's book, explaining incidental remarks, as well as the selection of material generally, and the general unfolding of the Jewish unbelief to its climax in the cross. Many points in Christ's teaching—hidden or half revealed at the time of utterance—become luminous through this medium of interpretation, so that we can understand how it happens that there is so marked a difference in form, as well as in substance, in the discourses of our Lord reported in this narrative, compared with those of the others, to say nothing of the adaptation absolutely demanded of a writer to suit locality and occasion. In those we have just such discourses as would be the easiest to retain and to communicate. In John we have such as would be most difficult to understand at the time of utterance, and such as memory, stimulated by gradual insight, would recall. We can understand how, through this long pondering on the words of the Master, their deeper import had laid hold of John's mind—their bearing especially

on Christ's own wonderful personality ; and it is not unreasonable to think that the disciple who was nearest in sympathy to the Master, who was the beloved disciple, the most impressible, the one of all, in silent adoration of his ideal, drinking in the spirit of that Master, should come in the course of the progressive teaching of the Spirit to absorb into his own intuitions the Master's thoughts and modes of expression—

Since much that at the first, in deed and word,
Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,
Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
Fed thro' such years, familiar with such light,
Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
Of new significance and fresh result,
What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
And named them in the Gospel I have writ.

Put together the sympathy which existed between the Lord and this disciple, and the attraction which would draw a contemplative but ardent mind to precisely those mysterious aspects of the Person of Jesus and His relations to God and to men which are herein expounded ; and further, the continuous unbroken meditation on and recollection of all he had seen and heard,—which was his daily life,—in the light of all Divine teaching without and within,—and we can have little difficulty in appreciating the representation of the Lord, so different in form and substance, which is here set before us. It could not but be different from the earlier records, as a statement of facts differs from the unfolding of the absolute and universal principles of truth that underlie the facts, and of which the facts are signs. And if one may be inclined to think that in this case we can hardly distinguish between the words of the Master and those of the disciple, where the former, for instance, end in some conversations and discourses, and where the latter begin ; or whether the very words of the Lord have not been so steeped in the colouring of the disciple's own mind as to take from them something of that exact fidelity which we would now desire, then it has to be remembered that what is important is not the literal report of every word used, or nothing except the words

used by the Lord in His discourses ; but the faithful impression conveyed of the truths taught by Him, of the thoughts which He meant to become the possession of mankind. A summary of His discourses, for example, is all that we have, and it is clear that a summary may be of more practical advantage than the full report of every word uttered. We depend, no doubt, on the skill of the reporter or condenser ; on his thorough understanding of the truths ; on his sympathy with the mind of the speaker ; on his grasp of the salient features of the discourse or speech ;—but this being given, the more he has made the ideas of the discourse his own, the better he is able to present them to the reader or hearer. Jesus never intended His apostles to be mere verbal or shorthand reporters. Literary interest was alien to them. They were men absorbing the spirit, the thoughts, the words of their Master. In fact, had John or any of the rest committed to writing at the time the utterances of Jesus, we may safely say that such writing would have been, compared with the living reproduction in their minds and hearts by the Holy Spirit of whatever the Lord taught, absolutely useless, and possibly misleading. It is obvious that many of His utterances could not fail to be treasured up in the disciples' memories, and exactly as He spoke them. Yet, at the same time, the great question is, not as to the literalness of the words, but as to the essential meaning of them, —the great lesson of this or that discourse. And in the case of John we have this answered, if anywhere, to our complete satisfaction ; for who, if not he, was fitted under the promised influence of the Holy Spirit to recall and to grasp the many things which his Lord had spoken, and convey them to his readers as truth which he had himself become conversant with and lived upon through years of vicissitude ? “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” It is therefore of little consequence, or we may rather say of absolutely none, whether we have a transmission of the exact words of Jesus here or there ; or whether, if Jesus spoke them, He spoke them all at one time and in such an order. What we are concerned to know is, whether the Evangelist has presented us with a true impression of what was spoken or done, which resolves itself

further into the question whether his own impression was adequate to begin with? and of this we can be left in little doubt. "If the life of Christ made a great and enduring impression on any disciple, then assuredly on John. Can we think otherwise of the disciple whom Jesus loved, than as lovingly observant of all that came from Jesus, and all that concerned Him? The most unintelligible word of the Master, and the smallest traits of character, clung to the soul of the observer. Sooner would the disciple forget his own life than that of his Lord; sooner would all his early youth vanish from his recollection than the time when he was born to a new and higher life in his intercourse with Jesus; when he experienced and received what filled his soul thenceforth and became the foundation and centre of his life. Should love and inspiration achieve everything else, and not be able to strengthen the power of the memory in those things which had kindled love and inspiration?" (Lücke). If one should object to the dogmatic prepossession with which the Evangelist approaches his great theme, or to the special aspect of the Christ-hood and Divine Sonship through which he interprets the life and work of the Lord, we must bear in mind that any record to be worthy of the name of a representation of a character, or of the unfolding of truth or a principle, must partake of the nature of an interpretation;¹ that is, it must be ideal; a painting, not a photograph, reliable in the essentials in all that belongs to the true spiritual form, and in that alone. And John has risen to this highest possible point from which man can interpret the ministry of the Lord. For "fancy with fact is just one fact the more." Nor for this purpose was anything more needful than that which the Apostle has given us here, namely, a selection—a sparse selection—of materials on which to form the judgment. It argues no defect in the picture that this is so, as if the incidents might be forced to yield a wrong or partial impression. These incidents speak for themselves; they are substantially of the same cast as those we find in the other Gospels; the same Person stands before us as there. Besides which, it is not in the multiplicity of details that we are to find the correct impression of the subject, so

¹ Westcott has some admirable remarks on this point in his *Introduction*.

much as in the skilful adjustment of that which is submitted, leaving the impression of the unity of the Person, and of His relations and aims. John is looking at the Person and work of Jesus from a particular point, and this conception rules not his *facts* but his *selection* of facts,—a selection best fitted to serve the purpose he has in view, namely, to convince his readers to all time that there is in this Person of whom he speaks—whatever else there may be—there is also this, that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that faith in His name imparts life.

And one additional remark may be made. It has been attempted to compare John's representation of the Lord with that given in the other three evangelists, to determine which is the more accurate picture of the two. The result is what we might expect, that each picture has its own advocates to the depreciation of the other. Of John we are told, on the one hand, that it is a highly-wrought, imaginative ideal sketch, without sufficient historic background ; and, on the other hand, that it is the really accurate description of Christ's Person, by which we can correct the slight and superficial delineations of the earlier records.¹ Any apparent difference in the representation obviously arises from the fact that the Synoptists treat much more of the ethical than of the doctrinal, and John treats more of the doctrinal than of the ethical, since all he records is a comment on the truth that the Word was made flesh,—an illustration of the Divine nature and glory of Jesus. Yet the Person of our Lord is the same in both ; there is the same sublime self-consciousness apparent in both. He who says in Matthew, “Come unto me, and I will give you rest,” is the same who says in John, “How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” In all the four records the conception of true life as fellowship with Jesus in faith and love and holiness is conspicuous. Accepting, therefore, whatever variations and difficulties come with

¹ E.g. Schleiermacher, who met difficulties in detail by the argument of the impression made by the Gospel as a whole, and declared Christianity to be an inexplicable phenomenon on the exclusive presupposition of the Christ of the Synoptists.

the traditional view of the equal authority and truth of the twofold picture given of the Saviour,¹ we may feel, further, that no one aspect of Jesus presented through a finite mind can exhaust His fulness. We need, and have, several aspects, and each is true to itself and to Him, while each is needed in every age to meet the varying wants of men. Doubtless John's record is an advance on the others, it presupposes the others (just as Paul's doctrine of Christ is an advance and presupposes more of dogmatic fulness than is explicitly contained in these); but it is not truer than the others, and it cannot supersede them. Without the first three we should have in John a spiritual, sublime sketch, lifting us up out of life's common conditions; deep-sighted views of Christ's office and essential nature. But we should feel that we needed something to go before—something showing us a little more of the actual touching of the ladder stretched down from heaven on the Son of man with our earth. Without John we should feel that there were reachings out beyond what we had in these three records, that something was needed to follow from it all; the end of the ladder being lost in the clouds, rather than the clear vision of the Father standing at the top of it. While, however, we feel that even such a comparison is to be delicately handled, we may add that John himself seems to allude to the higher comprehension granted to him of the eternal, absolute, and universal aspects of the gospel, when, in his preliminary address to his readers in his First Epistle, he tells them the scope of his record in saying that he has written to "little children," to "fathers," and to "young men," not to one class, but to all classes and ages, as if sensible that his view was a view that ultimately gathered up into it every other, and spoke to the hearts of every age of Christian growth. Matthew writes to "fathers," showing that Jesus Christ is He who is from the beginning, the same as prophets foretold, the fulfilment of all the past promises. Mark to "young men," showing that Christ is their present strength and victory, the flower and fruit of life. And Luke to "little children,"

¹ Holzmann asserts that the kernel of the Johannine problem is in this: that on the supposition of the historic exactness of the fourth account, the rise of so one-sided a Galilean tradition as that of the Synoptists appears inconceivable.

showing the boundless pity of the heart of the Father, who sent the Son to die for them and to forgive their sins. John claims a scope comprehensive enough to embrace all the three ages, since he tells of Him who was in the beginning, whose life is the light of men, and who gives to as many as receive Him the right to become children of God.

In considering the steps of the proof by which the Apostle establishes the twofold position that Jesus is the Christ and also the Son of God, it will be observed that there are two separate points. For in proportion to John's elevated conceptions with regard to the relation of Jesus to the Father, was the necessity laid on him to show that this was not a mere speculative position, but was rooted in the historic past—that is to say, the mysterious Person who, coming from eternity, revealed the Father to men, was no other than the historic Messiah of the Jewish nation promised of old time by God. The Word not only became flesh in the sphere of lofty abstraction, but Jesus the Christ actually came to His own, who received Him not. He came as the Lamb of God to take sin away, who also said, "I and my Father are one." It was important, therefore, for John to keep both these points clearly before the minds of his readers, that as, on the one hand, they might see the world-wide significance of the appearance of the Messiah among the Jews, who now no longer existed as a nation ; so, on the other hand, they might see how the sublime conclusions about the Son of God really rested on matters of fact. The Evangelist's record embraces a series of incidents in which Jesus manifested forth His Divine glory as the Only-begotten from the Father ; and side by side with this self-disclosure of what He is in Person, involving both what He is to God and what He is to men, there runs a double line of faith on the one hand and of unbelief on the other, from their earliest beginnings in the events that were the means of kindling them up to the climax of the one in the cross, and of the other in the confession by the most despondent of the twelve after Christ's resurrection : "My Lord and my God." Excluding the introduction and the appendix, the Gospel from ch. i. 19 to ch. xx. embraces two great movements—the manifestation

of Jesus to the world, out of which He gradually drew those who believed, and then His manifestation to these alone whom He had thus drawn out of the world, completed in the final testimony afforded by the circumstances of His death, resurrection, and subsequent appearances. The results are summed up, to begin with, in the wonderful introduction, i. 1-18, in which John rises at once to the height of his argument when he describes the Word in His eternal and unconditioned existence, in the sphere of Godhead, and then in His relations to the world—the external creation—and the inward and moral world of man, with the admission of the claims founded on these relations by some and their rejection by others ; in other words, the relations of Jesus Christ first to God and then to men—this latter determined by belief on the one hand, and by unbelief on the other. The perfect Revealer of God has come amongst men in flesh to make known to them God, and give them life in God. All who receive Him do receive through Him eternal life.

The manifestation of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God begins with the testimony of John Baptist, who testifies to Him both as the Lamb of God and as the Son of God, which great designations may be taken as comprehending the entire relations of Jesus to men, as Deliverer from sin, and as Bestower of His own Divine Sonship. Then it widens out to embrace the first disciples, then the friendly gathering at Cana ; then the circle widens still, when Jesus presents Himself in Jerusalem as the Reformer of the Temple abuses, and makes an appeal to the consciences of the rulers. Then Samaria is embraced, and lastly the Court of Herod of Galilee. These four opening chapters therefore may be regarded as giving us the first phase of Christ's introduction of Himself and His claims to the world ; which He did by various means, in word and work, in personal influence, and in asserting power over the external elements. In chs. v. and vi. we have the results of this first manifestation put before us, first in Jerusalem, and second in Galilee. In Jerusalem, where Jesus by healing the impotent man draws attention to Himself as the Son of God with power to give life and to judge men for the use of it ; and as borne witness to by the Baptist, by Scripture, by His works, by

men's consciences, by His own word, and by the Father, the results are that He is rejected, and plans laid against His life. In Galilee, results apparently are to go the other way. After the miracle of the loaves and fishes the people resolve to make Him king ; but when the true exposition of His claims is understood, they are offended, and the great majority of those hitherto professing faith in Him abandon His cause. This represents the first stage of the growth of unbelief, both in Judea and in Galilee. The offset is found in the growth of belief, at this critical moment expressed by Simon Peter : "We believe, and are sure that Thou art the Holy One of God."

Chs. vii. to x. represent the second stage of the manifestation of Jesus to the world ; and there is an advance in the solemnity of it, as is apparent from the general tone of Christ's appeals. He appeals to men as athirst, offering them the water of life ; as dark, offering them the light of life ; as in need of guidance, offering to be their Shepherd. He had already manifested His glory by work and word. He had borne distinct testimony to His person and His claims on human belief. What He insists on now at this second stage is rather the witness and credentials for His mission ; the words He speaks are the Father's words, and the works, His Father's works ; and, in addition, He warns His hearers that it is those only who are of God who can hear His words. If those who rejected Him formerly were fighting against clear evidence, they are now stifling the voice of conscience. Hence so much reference to being "of the truth," "of the Father," "of God ;" knowing the truth by moral intuition when presented, recognising Him who is the Light of the world, and who is the Truth, simply because light and truth in the moral and spiritual regions are their own proofs. Thus there is progress. God's revelation meets man's need, and should therefore elicit man's testimony. Testimony unreceived leads on to judgment. The Jews will not believe that Jesus is of God though He cures the man blind from his birth ; while the simple-minded man himself fully expresses the faith which, where no prejudice exists, springs out of such a work of mercy. Jesus then in the Parable of the Good Shepherd makes an emphatic distinction between those who are His and those who are not, between

those who hear and receive and those who will not. The question is no longer whether there is proof sufficient for them to believe, but whether they are the sheep who recognise the voice of the true Guide of human lives, and whether they are proving themselves worthy of eternal life. And so the second stage ends with the growth of unbelief, which is now branded as the refusal to look at the light, or believe it, swelling into violent opposition to, and attempt to kill, Jesus. Side by side, however, there is the growth of belief, from the wavering uncertainty of ch. vii. and the confession wrung even from the officers of the Sanhedrim, “Never man spake like this man!” to the full confession of the man born blind; and the transition from the merely negative recognition by many that He was a good and true man at least, to the accession of many to the ranks of His discipleship when He withdrew from Jerusalem.

And now we reach the third and crowning stage of His self-revelation to the world in chs. xi. and xii., the central theme in which is naturally the raising of Lazarus from the dead, with its consequent results on the minds of believers and unbelievers, and on the wavering. The rulers passed a formal resolution to put Him to death, and offered a reward for His apprehension. His disciples were bound more closely to Him in love and loyalty, and He receives the public avowal of their feelings of enthusiastic devotion in the private anointing by Mary, in the popular acclaim of the multitude who greeted Him as Messianic King in His procession from Bethany to the city. And at this crisis the great heathen world is heard knocking at His gate in the expressed desire of Greeks to see Him. Thus His revelation to men in general ends with the ripening of unbelief into the determination of murder; and of belief to passionate, self-forgetful love and faith, and the instinctive recognition by the people that He is their true king. The Evangelist at this point, xii. 37-50, sums up the results of His ministry. Casting a backward glance on the progress both of faith and unbelief, he is arrested for a moment by the sorrowful enigma, how those who had witnessed such a ministry of word and work, and for whose behoof it was primarily intended, should have requited it with enmity; he seeks the solution of it in the

eternal decrees of God ordaining that this rejection of the Christ should happen,—a rejection already foretold, with the reasons for it, in the pages of their own Scriptures. This first part of the Evangelist's record is sublimely wound up by the introduction of Jesus making His last appeal to men as the world's Light, and throwing on them the responsibility of rejecting Him. To reject Him was to be false to the light of God within them.

Jesus, having thus ended His personal manifestation to the world, turns before His death to the circle of His discipleship, and there reveals Himself in the most wonderful yet simple and loving way to them. It is now only the unfolding of their faith with which He concerns Himself. His mission to the world is over. The one thing left is to die for the world that will not receive Him. Meanwhile, those who have received Him must be strengthened. So He takes them into the inner chamber of the mysteries of His own union with the Father, of their union with Him and with the Father, and, to console them for the separation which He announces, promises the Holy Spirit as their new Comforter and Friend. And when, in answer to His plain declaration that He had come forth from the Father and was about to return to Him, the disciples say, "Now . . . we believe that Thou camest forth from God!" the Lord turns to the Father Himself, opens up to Him in hearing of His own the whole height and depth of His soul, gives thanks for this success,—first-fruits of the glorious harvest to be,—and requests, while He strengthens Himself for the impending conflict, that the end of it all may result in the mutual glorification of Father and Son, in which those given to Him out of the world must share.

We then have the account of the Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion, and Death, in which unbelief culminates. But faith perceives, even in these dark events, the means through which itself attains its own full maturity ; they also are signs revealing the true glory of the Son of God. Thus John emphasizes the voluntariness of Christ's sufferings, the fulfilment of a Divine purpose in them, and the shining out of a Divine majesty through them ; so that in the very moment of bitterest humiliation Jesus appears as the Holy One, the Light and Life of

the world, and King of Truth ; and when the soldier pierces His side, the mingled blood and water issuing thence afford the symbol and the evidence to faith of the Messianic redeeming power,—“ He that saw it bare record, and His record is true ; and he knoweth that He saith true, that ye might believe.” Even in the empty tomb faith gathers proof ; and finally, the line of belief culminates in the confession of Thomas in that upper chamber at Jerusalem when Jesus called him to put his fingers into the print of the nails, and Thomas exclaimed, “ My Lord and my God ! ” Here terminates the Apostle’s series of proofs. It has been his object to show the luminous path by which the faith, which was begotten in his own breast on that memorable day by the banks of the Jordan, was nurtured and disciplined by word and work, by signs of the Divine glory, until in the most faint-hearted of the eleven deep conviction overbore every doubt and difficulty. And here the writer concludes. The ch. xxi. added, probably by himself (except the closing verses), but at a later date, belongs rather to the history of the future unfolding of the Church ; yet, true to the plan of the Gospel, John narrates the miracle that was a symbol of the success which should attend the apostolic labours ; and Jesus still continues in the calm majesty of His demeanour and His power of reading their thoughts, and foretelling their future, His self-disclosure as the Christ, the Son of God.

Something may be added relating to the character of Christ’s teaching in this Gospel which differs considerably, both in form and substance, from the discourses of the first three. In these we have a historic account of what Jesus taught,—and, mainly, as He moved among the common people and adopted a more popular form of address ; here of what Jesus taught regarding *Himself*, and, mainly, on the one hand, as He had to defend Himself against the assaults of the rulers, and adopted a paradoxical and enigmatical style ; on the other hand, as He unbosomed Himself in the privacy of the last hours to His faithful disciples, when the exalted character of the themes necessitated an almost mystic expression. There is no teaching in John like that of the Sermon on the Mount, where Christian duties are expounded. The teaching here hinges directly

on Christ's own personality, in its double reference to His Father and to men, as Lamb and Son of God. To receive Him is to become a child of God : the one work of God is to believe on Him whom He has sent. Always—back to Himself He makes miracle and discourse refer as to the one hope for men, the passage affording a very nearly perfect parallel in the other Gospels being that in Matt. xi. 27 ff, where Jesus bids men come to Himself and have rest, because none knows the Father but He, and none knows the Son but the Father. In John this is the echo and burden of every discourse. Hence we have such sublime statements : "Before Abraham was, I am ;" "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins ;" "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself." Mark also such assertions as the following: "I am the Bread of Life," "I am the Light of the World," "I am the Door of the Sheep," "I am the Good Shepherd," "I am the Resurrection and the Life," "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life," "I am the True Vine." To affirm the identity of the Christ of the Synoptists with the Christ of John it is not needful to sacrifice historic fact to the laws of development, nor the latter to the former. The self-assertion of Jesus in the upper chamber is no more pronounced than in the Sermon on the Mount. Nor is the love, which alone could fulfil the duties expounded in that sermon, more conspicuous there than in the upper chamber. "He that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them ;" these words are echoed back from the chamber to the Mount : "If a man love me, he will keep my words ;" "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." As for historic fact, where John touches on the same events as are recorded in the Synoptists, the agreement is remarkable. But he moves, for the most part, on lines that are unknown to these. As for development, deeper views were bound to follow the lengthened meditation on the things of which John had been a witness, as the Lord had expressly foretold, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now ; howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."

It will be noted how the gradual development of Christ's doctrine

rests on a chain of actual facts. It is no abstract principle that is being proved and illustrated. It is the teaching drawn from things that happened,—the deepest interpretation of them certainly, but by one who was competent to be the interpreter. There is a continuity through the Gospel ; the conflict deepens, the scenes follow and rise out of one another, moving forward in the line of Christ's gradual self-disclosure. We start with Nathanael's confession, and we end with that of Thomas. And all along we are verifying the truth of Christ's declaration to Nathanael, "Thou shalt see greater things than these." It is objected that such symmetry of composition tells against historical exactness. We shall bear in mind (1) that of necessity our Lord had a plan according to which He acted in all parts of His ministry. We cannot suppose that it was left to chance to determine whether He should go now to Galilee and now to Judea, or what He should do in either locality, or what He should speak. Least of all could this be true of His appearances in Jerusalem, and His interviews with the representatives of the nation, and of His training of the Apostles. That Jesus had a plan, and that it was part of it to unfold in a growing systematic manner all that He claimed to be, both towards God and towards men, especially when in contact with the rulers and with His own disciples, cannot be well doubted. And (2) that if John, looking back on the events of that wonderful time, was able to see the order and method in them, the law on which Jesus proceeded ; was able to seize the line of progress running through it, binding the beginning and the end together ; if he saw what could not have been seen at the time, how carefully the three years' ministry had been projected, and how accurately each part and event in it fitted on to the other, it is simply what we might expect. So that the unity and symmetry of the book reflect the unity and symmetry of Christ's own plan, as these become apparent to the Apostle when far enough distant from the events to be able to grasp the great ideas of them, and enter intelligently into the mind of His Master, as well as to comprehend something of the full significance of the appearance of the Son of God in the history of mankind.

It is a remarkable fact, the inferences of which are of weight in this connection, that while this Gospel rises to the sublimest mysteries and abstractions, in none of the other records do we meet with more real figures moving about Jesus. In a few words we realize a scene, and have an insight into character. Such are Caiaphas, and Pilate, and Judas on the one hand ; and the disciples, the sisters of Bethany, the Samaritan woman, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus, Joseph, the man born blind, on the other. They are living men and women John brings before us, and yet it is not strange that they too should become signs reaching out to issues beyond the merely individual ; incidental and occasional elements being so treated as to exhibit the universal and eternal. So that the men and women who received or rejected the Saviour seem something more than so many Jews of temporary interest—they represent types of faith and unbelief through all the ages.

Another distinguishing mark of this Gospel is the emphasis that is placed on the *personal, spiritual* influence exercised by Jesus. This is noticeable from the beginnings of the faith elicited by Him in the disciples, to the closing words addressed to Thomas in response to his confession. The education of the faith of the disciples is always seen to depend on their turning away from the merely outward in Jesus to the perception of His grace and truth. And the chief condemnation that lies on the rejecters of Jesus consists in their having quenched the inward voice of witness to the truth that, do what they would, they could not hinder from speaking in His favour. Thus, for example, there is an evident endeavour all through to raise men above the desire to see wonders, and above the faith that springs out of miracles and the like, and to bring them into higher, truer conceptions of what God's power over human minds consists in. Nathanael is told that he shall see greater things in Jesus than the knowledge of the hidden hours of his life. He should see heaven opened, and angels ascending and descending on the Son of man ; that is, a spiritual perception of Jesus as the one way of access to and communion with the Father. And though many believed on His name at Jerusalem, on the occasion of the first Passover, when

they saw the miracles which He did, it is significantly said, "Jesus did not commit Himself to them."

Again, very instructive is the answer to Nicodemus, who expressed his belief in Christ's Divine mission because of the miracles which He did, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Remark also how it is recorded (ch. iv.) that many more Samaritans believed because of His own *word*, and said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." And then there is the express remark of Jesus to the Herodian courtier, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe;" and the important addition, "The man believed the *word* that Jesus had spoken." To the crowds which followed Him by the Sea of Galilee Jesus said, "Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles" (as the signs of some hidden and spiritual glory), "but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." And noteworthy is the confession of Simon Peter on this occasion, "Thou hast the *words* of eternal life." Consider also the following sequence: "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life;" "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine;" "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" "He that is of God heareth God's words;" "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." Also, "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath One that judgeth him;" "If a man love me, he will keep my words." Instructive too, in this line of thought, is the fact that Martha expresses her full conviction in her Lord's personality before the raising of her brother, resting on Jesus' own word, "I am the resurrection and the life," for she immediately adds, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

From such passages one important feature of this Gospel will be recognised—the weight attached to the personal influence of Jesus, as a spiritual Power, acting on the minds and hearts of men by

means of reasonable convictions. It is, no doubt, on the wholeness of Christ's personality that the Apostle builds his argument : His character, His words, His works. All together form the signs done in the disciples' presence. His character, for Jesus challenges His enemies : "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" His works : "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." His words : "Never man spake like this man." But it is chiefly in the spiritual and moral convincingness that the power of Jesus is represented as consisting ; and when He asks His disciples to believe *Himself* that He is in the Father and the Father in Him, *i.e.* to take His own word, supported by the impression of His character, He adds, "Or else believe me for the very works' sake," meaning, if the highest proof be ineffective, then take the lower.

And then the conclusion is consistent with the entire scope when Jesus replies to Thomas' confession : "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." This word goes back to meet the initial word to Nathanael : "Thou shalt see greater things than these." The aim of Christ is to raise men to perceive His glory as the Son of God in that spiritual power which word and character evince, and in the evidence of truth which shines in its own light. And this fact has an important bearing on the unique place which the Holy Spirit receives in this Gospel (hardly mentioned in the other three) ; that mysterious Divine Presence who is promised to the disciples, and because the Lord leaves them, who will fill His very place, and make Him even more intelligible, and therefore more real and near, than when they had His own company on earth. This is but the natural following out of that aspect of Christ's influence which is uniformly presented in John's Gospel, so that we understand how they who have not seen yet can believe ; and, through Him who conveys the spiritual impression of the Lord of glory, and who abides with the Church to the end, be more blessed than they even who have seen and believed. Writing, as John did, on the threshold of a new century, when the events were growing dim in the distance, when men in Ephesus were saying to him, "Ah ! had we seen Him as you saw Him, and heard His own accents, and touched Him as

you did, we would believe and live like you," he felt that it was needful to present to the Church the fact that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; that receiving the spiritual power of His words, and of His Person through His words, those who never saw Him or His works were nevertheless the blessed sharers of His grace and glory ; that they were nowise behind the favoured companions of His temporary sojourn on earth.

And we may add that the seven miracles (we exclude the one recorded after the resurrection in ch. xxi.) are specially introduced as signs of the glory of the Father that dwelt in Christ, and in the greater number bear up the discourses that follow them. The first miracle in Cana of Galilee can hardly fail to be recognised as symbolical of the whole ministry of the Lord Jesus ; and the second, the healing of the courtier's son, makes prominent the peculiarity we have just been considering, the desire of Jesus to elevate men to purer and more spiritual conceptions of His power. Then the five which follow in an ascending series to the climax in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, are all explained by the manifestation of the Saviour's personal glory which they make. "My Father works until now, and I work ;" "The Son quickeneth whom He will ;" "I am the Bread of Life ;" "I am the Light of the World ;" "I am the Good Shepherd ;" "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Of them all Jesus says, "They bear witness that the Father hath sent me," because they exhibit the mercy, the love, the goodness that mark the works of the Father. They draw the eye to Him who is more than they all, and who says of Himself, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." That is the second greatest statement of the Book,—the consequence of the greatest, which is, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

Man apprehends Him newly at each stage
 Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done ;
 And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved.
 You stick a garden-plot with ordered twigs
 To show inside lie germs of herbs unborn,
 And check the careless step would spoil their birth ;

But when herbs wave, the guardian twigs may go,
It is no longer for old twigs ye look
But to the herb's self. This Book's fruit is plain,
Nor miracles need prove it any more.

Nowhere is Jesus depicted in this Gospel—not even on the cross—but as revealing the eternal glory of the Father, and compelling belief in some at least. The humiliation implied by the other three in His birth, in the circumstances of His outward condition, in His agony and death, is penetrated and lit up by the Divine splendour. The beginning of the Gospel: that is, “In the beginning was the Word.” His birth: that is, “The Word was made flesh . . . and we beheld His glory.” His rejection by unbelief: that is the necessary fulfilment of the word of God in prophecy; nay, even of the Divine purpose, according to which He has a people given to Him by the Father who shall come to Him without fail. His death: that is the completion of His testimony to the Father’s love; and the words, “It is finished!” shed a halo of heavenly radiance round the shame of Calvary, so that he who saw believed and bare record. All this is depicted, because there was that Divine glory in Him to be depicted. But then we have not in the other three records a more touching presentation of the tenderness and reality of our Lord’s human nature. John’s line of argument is not identical with that of the writer to the Hebrews; but in one respect they are parallel, namely, in describing the truth of the Divine Redeemer’s ability to sympathize with suffering humanity. It is obvious how closely the words, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified,” border on one leading thought of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Captain of our salvation is said to have been perfected through suffering in order to make perfect His redeemed. “He who sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one,” says the writer to the Hebrews; and Jesus, according to John, explains how He who sanctifies them does so by first sanctifying Himself. In point of fact, John’s record, though later than the Epistle to the Hebrews, underlies the doctrine there

unfolded of the truth and tenderness of the Saviour's sympathy with suffering, tempted men.¹ He who invites the two disciples to His house, and converses with them there ; He who goes to a marriage feast, and helps to increase the joy ; He who is wearied and thirsty, who weeps with friends who weep for their dead, who is troubled and knows not what to say for emotion,—is really man like ourselves, though the full revelation of the Eternal God ; and the more closely we study His features as this Gospel delineates them, we shall discern more of the Divine glory that shines through them, and more of the unspeakable tenderness of Divine love that breathes in them, and come to Him with a fuller heart and a growing appreciation of all we mean when, like Thomas, we make our adoring confession, “ My Lord and my God !”

V. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

It was indispensable that the gospel of Christ should be shown to be a gospel for the whole world, and this could be done only by exhibiting the universal aspect of Christ's Person, work, and teaching : the eternal significance of His appearing among men ; the inexhaustible fulness of the truth in Him for mind, heart, and conscience. The Gospel of Luke is an answer to the question which came in course of time to be put by thoughtful Christian men, What really are the facts on which our faith is based ? And the Gospel of John is an answer to the next question, which could not fail to follow, What is the essential and absolute meaning of these facts for all mankind ? The following considerations will make this clear. There is in this Fourth Gospel almost an entire silence about the “ kingdom of God,” the commonplace of the earlier records ; and the sole reference to the idea in the conversation with Nicodemus (ch. iii.) describes it as a spiritual condition into which the individual can enter only by a

¹ Though Thoma (*Die Genesis des Johannes-Evangeliums*) says : “ We do not feel sympathy go out from Him, that He could feel pity for our weakness, or that we might rejoice with Him in His majesty.” And Holzmann (*Einleitung in das N. T.*) says : “ There is a repression of truly human traits.” But comp. iv. 6 f. xi. 35, and xix. 26 f.

radical, moral, and spiritual renewal. The true worship of God is the worship of a Father in spirit and in truth. The whole duty of man is comprehended in belief in the Son whom the Father has sent. Life, true eternal life, consists in the knowledge of and fellowship with the Father and the Son, is the present privilege of every believer, and attests its own presence. The risen Lord Jesus, though ascended to the Father, is personally present with believing men, through the gift to them of the Holy Spirit ; and this was His “coming again” to His disciples, and not the establishment of an outward Messianic reign. He *is* to come again, only with the object not of being with His disciples *where they are*, but of taking them to be with Him *where He is*. The resurrection is already a fact of the inward experience, since the believer’s life is in communion with Him who is “the Resurrection and the Life ;” though presently the inner experience will be an outward one as well : “I will raise him up at the last day.” The judgment of God is past for the believer, for it is a process continually going on through the sifting power of Christ’s own word ; by his present rejection of which the unbeliever is condemned, and by his present acceptance of which the believer is justified—“is passed from death unto life.” It is this present continuous process which makes the fact of the final results intelligible : “the resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of judgment.” Further, the truth of the Christian faith is witnessed to in the universal consciousness of men ; Christ appealing both to the intuitive recognition of righteousness, and to the deep sense of need—need of God, and need of deliverance from sin. This is a witness to the necessity and to the possibility, and even to the nature of Christ’s revelation, which is in every man’s breast if he will but permit its voice to be heard.

Taking these characteristics of this Gospel into account, its relation to the earlier Gospels, and the entire historic truthfulness of both earlier and later records, will be perceived.

Unless Renan’s view of Jesus be correct, and we can believe that He allowed Himself to be influenced by chance and by the misguided zeal of disciples, we must hold that from the first He was perfectly conscious of the place which His appearance held in the world’s

history. But He could not make that intelligible to His disciples. They looked at Him through their Jewish prepossessions. The utmost which they expected of Him was that He should be the Jewish Messiah-King. His death and resurrection revolutionized, to a large extent, their thoughts and hopes ; still, for long after the ascension, they looked for His return to set up His kingdom in Israel. Gradually the Holy Spirit educated them by the force of outward events, and by the better understanding of their Master's teaching, to relinquish these hopes, and instead of what they lost they found a greater reach and width in the gospel of their Lord. But He had foreseen it all ; and although He was compelled to speak, to a large extent, within the limits of their intelligence, He was aiming at and working for a far wider horizon, one day to be gained also by them. He had many things to say which they could not bear ; and He promised that the Holy Spirit should be their guide and interpreter.

And the fulfilment of this promise is clear in the Gospel by John. For what we have unfolded to us is precisely the deeper significance of Christ's ministry. Everything local and partial has disappeared. We are taught all that His coming among men implied for the world, and through all the ages. We see how the teaching, which could not but be obscure at the first, and which was naturally passed over by the earlier popular traditions, had become luminous in the retrospect. Hence the development of truth in this Gospel is simply the proof that John had at last attained the height to which his Master strove to bring the Apostles when He was yet with them. We must bear in mind also the leavening process that had followed the labours of Paul, who preached a free and universal gospel, lifting the faith altogether out of the lines which had grown too narrow for it. No doubt it was providential that Paul should have been called to the faith and apostleship without having been one of the companions of the Lord during His earthly ministry. Even for those companions themselves it was expedient that their Lord should leave them, in order that the Spirit of truth might better interpret their Lord to them. And, in the same way, Paul was set apart to meditate on the fact of Christ's appearance on earth, without having known Christ

“after the flesh ;” and the results of that meditation lie before us in his Epistles. Paul’s gospel was not a different gospel from that preached by the other Apostles ; for he is careful to tell the Galatian Church that when he communicated to the leaders in Jerusalem the truths which he taught, they had no complaint to make, or suggestion to offer. But the Spirit of the Risen Lord had enabled him to grasp some deeper measure of His “unsearchable riches,” and of “the mystery of the faith,” so that while the doctrine of the Pauline Epistles, on the one hand, forms a transition to the doctrine of John, on the other hand it presupposes a doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, not clearly perceived at first, and therefore unrecorded, although known, at last given to the world in the record of the Fourth Gospel by the Apostle who had lived and learned to apprehend it. To verify this we have only to compare Paul’s mystic conception of *faith* and fellowship with Christ (Gal. ii. 20) : “I am crucified with Christ ; and I live no more, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me,” with the teaching of Christ in John about the believer’s union with Himself ; and Paul’s remarkable conception of the Person of the Lord as given in Phil. ii., and in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, with the burden of our Lord’s discourses as these are narrated by the later Evangelist. It is not, therefore, too much to say that Paul’s deepest teaching would be inexplicable without the facts of the Fourth Gospel underlying it. And yet, at the same time, the Fourth Gospel is, in part, a necessary consequence of the teaching of Paul, since that teaching was fitted to raise questions which needed a solution, going deeper down into the character and personality of Christ than the earlier records went, and could be met only by a historic presentation of Him who was both Son of Man and Son of God, both the Lamb of God and the Light of the World, the Way, and the Truth, and the Life : the complete utterance, as Word, of God the Father ; and the Light in men as well as the Light without them, holding up their true eternal ideal of life. To the teaching of his Lord accordingly John went back, in order to meet the needs of a new age : and found in it the fulness of truth which the world

required, the eternal significance of the Revelation of Jesus Christ in time. And so long as man is what he is, the ultimate truths of religion are laid before him here. What more can we desire to know of God than this, that He is a Father? How can we be better assured of this than through the life, and word, and work of Him whose every action bore evidence that the Father had sent Him, and who with a ministry of unparalleled love and self-sacrifice, and a character of superhuman sinlessness behind Him, claimed faith in His assertion, “He that has seen me has seen the Father”? How can we have the contradictory problem of our present existence solved if not through Him who has revealed to us that we are sons of the Father by nature, though fallen under the power of another father, the devil, whose lusts we do; and that, conscious of the struggle between light and darkness, we are yet able to recognise the light and love of the Father shining towards us in the Son? How can we look for deliverance elsewhere than from Him who has conquered the powers of darkness by laying His life—which was without sin—down for men; glorifying the Father through that absolute self-annihilation which has judged the prince of this world and cast him out of his supremacy, and which is drawing all men to the cross? What higher blessedness can we conceive, or wish for, than a life in perfect union with God, abiding fellowship as sons with the Son and with the Father, the subjects of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and a life eternal given to us simply for the receiving? And what more comforting hope than the prospect of going to the Father, and having our own place in the Father’s home at last? These are the truths which are characteristic of this Fourth Gospel; and the mere enumerating of them shows that they were designed to meet a condition of things when speculation pushed its right of inquiry to the utmost, and demanded of the faith of Christ what it had to tell of the nature of God, and of the nature, actual and possible, of man; of the relations between God and man, of this present world and of the world to come. John sums up the answer in his own words (1 John v. 20): “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him

that is true ; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." The Evangelist was able to prove that the revelation of God in Christ had a response in the deepest intuitions of man—the child recognising the voice of the Father.

PLAN AND ARRANGEMENT.

The following is the plan of the Book :—

- I. The Prologue—The Word in His Eternal Being—Self-Revelation in Creation, in Conscience, in Reason, and in Flesh for Man's Redemption, i. 1-18.
- II. The History of Christ's Manifestation of His Glory as the only-begotten Son.

A.—In Public, i. 19-xii.

1. The Baptist's Testimony, i. 19-36.
2. Call of the first Disciples, i. 37-51.
3. First Manifestation at Cana in private, ii. 1-11.
4. Second Manifestation at Jerusalem in public, ii. 12-25.
5. Christ and Three different Types of Character. (*a*) The Pharisee and Member of Sanhedrim, iii. 1-21. (*b*) The Samaritan Woman, iv. 1-42. (*c*) The Herodian Courtier, iv. 43-54. With the Interlude of the Baptist's Final Testimony, iii. 22-end.
6. The Conflict begins. Jesus cures an impotent man in Jerusalem—Proclaims Himself the Son in relation to the Father—Is rejected by the Jews, ch. v.
7. Jesus feeds 5000 men in Galilee—Proclaims Himself the Bread of Life in relation to men—Is rejected by the Galileans, ch. vi.
8. The Conflict deepens. Jesus at the feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication—Divided sentiment—The Cleavage becoming more pronounced—He declares Himself the Water of Life, the Light of the World,

and the Good Shepherd — Cures the man born blind, chs. vii.—x.

9. Results. Jesus raises Lazarus, and the Sanhedrim resolve on His death, ch. xi.
10. Jesus anointed at Bethany — Enters Jerusalem — Greeks desire to see Him — He foretells His universal sovereignty through death — General summary, ch. xii.

B.—In Private to His own, chs. xiii.—xvii.

Alone with His own. He washes their feet, exposes the traitor, and then comforts and instructs the eleven in view of His departure; finally, when they make a complete confession of their faith, He turns to the Father and commends Himself and His disciples and Church to His care, chs. xiii.—xvii.

III. His Betrayal, Trial, Condemnation, and Death, chs. xviii., xix.

IV. Resurrection and Appearance to His Disciples in Jerusalem, ch. xx.

V. Epilogue—Appearance in Galilee—Simon Peter restored to Office, ch. xxi.

C O M M E N T A R Y.



P A R T I.

CHAPTERS I. TO VIII. VER. II.

THE GOSPEL BY JOHN.

CHAP. I. 1. IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

I. THE PROLOGUE—THE WORD IN HIS ETERNAL BEING— SELF-REVELATION IN CREATION, IN CONSCIENCE, IN REASON, AND IN FLESH FOR MAN'S REDEMPTION, i. 1–18.

1. *First Phase of the Existence of the Word—Relation to God.* He was (1) Eternal. “In the beginning,” because *from* the beginning (i Jn. i. 1); more than Gen. i. 1, where the beginning is relative to creation: here absolutely. Cp. also Col. i. 16, 17. “He is before all things” . . . “who is the beginning.” See Prov. viii. 23 and ch. xvii. 5, 24. (2) In fellowship with God, “was with God;” therefore *personally* distinct, and no mere attribute or relation of God in Himself (Prov. viii. 30; i Jn. i. 2); the Greek preposition, being *towards* rather than *with*, implies an impossibility of being divided from God, an eternal turning towards God. (3) Truly God, equal in essence: “God was the Word.” Mark the difference between Θεός and ὁ Θεός = God without and with the definite article; *i.e.* The Word was not identically and personally the same as the God with whom He was in fellowship; but equally God, no subordinated or created being. “Bounds are erected right and left between which the adjustment of the unity and the diversity may be prosecuted.” The Word, therefore, is neither a creature nor an emanation. John means the Son of God by the Word; but why did he use such a name? and where did he get it? Its use might be readily enough suggested by the whole of the O. T. Scriptures; especially by Gen. i. (to which in several respects there is here a marked likeness—*e.g.* the use of the words “light,” “darkness”). Applied to the Son of God, the term implies the complete identity in essential attributes, as the term “Son” implies the separateness in personality. Further, the term expresses God’s revelation of Himself. God has revealed Himself—His purpose of wisdom, grace, and of love—by His Word: God said, Let there be Light, etc. This speech of God underlies all knowledge we have of Him. God spoke in various ways, through various instruments, in O. T. times; but all His revelation then was through this same personal Logos or Word; an attempt to embody Him in action among men. His last and full and personal expression is in the man Christ Jesus (cp. Heb. i. 1; Col. i. 15, 19), who is therefore *The Word*; the one full adequate Revelation of God: no more is needful and no more is to be given; the complete utterance for human guidance and salvation. (See note.)

2, 3 The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that 4 was made. In him was life ; and the life was the light of men.

2. Emphatic summary of ver. 1. And preparing the way for the “all things” of ver. 3. This same was in the beginning, before any part of the universe was in existence. *The same*=“This,” viz. who was God.

3. *Second Phase*—Relation to the *Universe*—to the *Natural Creation*.—“All things”—individually=each and all. “All things”—collectively, see 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; Col. i. 16. “All things”—“A grand word” (Bengel). “Were made:”—the “Word” was not made. He *was* in the beginning. (*Das Werdende u. das Sein.*) We pass here from the sphere of pure and eternal existence to that of created things : to things which exist because they were *made* ; the Greek word signifying, that out of what was not previously existing all created things were made or became. The mode is of no consequence here, whether by evolution or otherwise (Heb. xi. 3). Cp. ch. viii. 58 for a precisely similar contrast. *By Him* or “through Him.” The usual term for the relation of the Son to creation. God made the worlds through His Son. Cp. Prov. viii. 14 ff. ; Rom. xi. 36 ; Col. i. 16 ; 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; Heb. i. 2. The Word was Mediator of creation ; gave utterance to the thoughts of God ; and by utterance—factual expression and existence. (1) Matter is not eternal or self-derived. (2) All things created were mediated through the Son. (3) And He is the power and centre of cohesion in them all (Eph. i. 10 ; Col. i. 17). And without, or apart from Him, was not *even one thing* made that is made [and now exists],—implying His immanence in the world as Creator and Preserver. A negative, as usual in John, strengthening the previous affirmative (iii. 16, vi. 50 ; 1 Jn. i. 5, ii. 4). For such parallelism see the Psalms. The Son is absolute Lord over every region of existence.

4. *Third Phase*—Relation to the *Moral Creation*. All things were made *through* Him ; but “*in* Him was life” [was, as in ver. 1 f.]. Life is one of John’s characteristic words, used thirty times, denoting the highest blessedness from the creature’s point of view. To *live* should mean to have an inexhaustible spring of felicity in oneself. God’s life is the joy of His pure Being. The creature’s life is the joy of being dependent on and finding its end in God. The end for which John writes is that men may have “life in Christ’s name.” This is the true spiritual and eternal life which consists in communion with God ; comprehending all lower forms and phases, whether moral or rational or physical, which answer the purpose of God. Cp. ch. v. 26, xi. 25, xiv. 6.

“The life was the light of men.” Light is another of John’s characteristic words, denoting *truth*—in natural, and moral as in intellectual spheres. All that constitutes man’s manhood—a rational moral being, made in the image of God, to find in fellowship with God his joy and end—he received from the Word ; and this great endowment was meant to be a light for itself, an inner principle guiding to truth of reason and truth of morals. Hence not, The Word was the light of men ; but, The life in men—derived from the Word, who is the eternal spring of life—was the light of men. The life which the lower creature has *is* its light ; it lives by the instincts which its life affords. So should men have an inner light for their life, be guided by the intuitions of it. And why are they not? Are there such intuitions? and true ones giving direction? And can men trust these? Do they obey them? Do they recognise them? The following verse seems to answer this,

5 And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light,
8 that all *men* through him might believe. He was not that

(*Was*—the past tense involves the source out of which all light proceeded.)
Comp. He that believeth hath *the witness in himself*.

5. Reason why men have not been guided, have not followed the suggestions of the light within them. That light had to contend with *darkness*. *Darkness*, opposed to “*light* :” one of John’s favourite words, meaning all that light is not ; whatever is contrary to the life of God in the soul of man. Where, whence, and what is that darkness? Questions John will answer in the record. *Darkness* is a will opposed to God’s will ; cp. Kant : On earth there is nothing good, *a good will* alone excepted. And it invaded the light ; it is not coeval with it.—*Did not comprehend it*, or “*lay hold of it*.” See Phil. iii. 12 f.; Rom. ix. 30 : (R.V. marg. “*did not overcome it*,” see xii. 35). Inability, through unwillingness and lack of sympathy ; light having no kindredness with darkness (ch. iii. 20). A solemn statement. *Shines*, “*is shining*,” from of old till now. (Alford, whole efficacy of the eternal Word among all men, Jews, Gentiles, Rom. i. 19.) The light has been of various degrees of clearness and strength, but ever has been shining since man was created. “*The darkness is past, and the true light is now shining*” (1 John ii. 8), refers to the full measure of light revealed in the Son Incarnate. Note the marvellous sublimity of these five verses (Faber’s Hymns, “*The Eternal Word*” and “*The Greatness of God* ;” Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Book iii. beginning, “*Hail Holy Light*,” etc.). *Did not comprehend it*, and never can—a principle receiving its most appalling confirmation in the cross of Christ. Men themselves are, as Paul says, “*darkness*,”—“*ye were sometimes darkness*” (Eph. v. 8).

6. The evangelist begins the historic record, the manifestation of the Word. From general reflections to particulars and to illustration.—*There was a man*,—contrasted with the *Logos*. “*God acts with men through men*” (Bengel). *Sent from God* (Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5; Isa. xl. 3)—the character of a true prophet :—*whose name was John* [John (Joannes) is the Greek form of Hebrew *Jehohannan*=*Jehovah* confers grace : the name significant of his mission.—*Theodore, Gotthold*].

7. *The same came*; cp. ver. 2, “*The same was*.” *For witness*. In what did this witness prove of value? It was from one who was universally believed in : “*all men counted John as a prophet*,” a witness against his own personal interests, impartial, therefore, and free ; besides, from one whose sympathies were not running in the same line. A better witness there could not have been. See ch. v. 33 ff. Then the nature of the witness was simply John’s whole activity, bringing men to feel their sins, need of a Saviour, and pointing Him out personally. He testified what was given him to testify by God (ver. 33). He came to be a witness, and to be a witness to the Light (the truth, ver. 33), and in order that all men might believe in it. *Through him*, *i.e.* through John. Belief rests on testimony. The light is its own witness (see ch. v. 36 f.; cp. xiv. 10 ff.), yet not independent of human testimony which is derived from God’s Spirit. John’s testimony turned men’s eyes to Christ, and confirmed those who believed.

9 Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own,

Comp. the words spoken by the Samaritans to the woman, iv. 42. "Witness," "witness-bearing," is one of the evangelist's frequent conceptions. Possibly it may imply a time when men, remote from the scene, and strangers to all the circumstances, were demanding the sources of evidence. Cp. 1 John iv. 14, v. 6-11; Rev. i. 2, xxii. 16, 18, 20. The term occurs thirty times in the Gospel alone. Prophecy is a witness to Christ—(1) indirectly, that He is needed; (2) directly, that He is coming. John said, He has come. Through John the first disciples believed; through them—all men.

8. *That was not the light, but [came] in order to*, etc. We must go to Christ Himself. The highest human function is to point men to Him as all-sufficient. It is surmised that the reference is to an undue estimate of the Baptist.

9. *The true*, ideally true, the only light in reality—genuinely so. Cp. vi. 32, iv. 23 and 37, vii. 28, xv. 1, xvii. 3, xix. 35. True, not as opposed to *false*, but to any lesser degree of light; and being such, is the source of light for "every man." As the sun is the one source of light to this world, so is Christ to the moral and spiritual life. Of all lesser sources of light and leading we say, "They are but broken lights of Thee." $\alpha\lambda\pi\lambda\nu\delta$; nine times in Gospel, four times in Epistle, ten times in Revelation. Is it of the same significance as in ver. 4: "The life was the light of men"? Perhaps not as an actual fact, but as a possibility which any man might make a fact for himself. Those who say "we see" refuse this light (ch. ix.). Of course, conscience is a light from Christ. But a deeper sense must be attached to this. Calvin decides rather for reason and intelligence, as before in ver. 4; others for the deeper sense; and perhaps this is more in accordance with the conceptions of John's Gospel. Anyway, it is the assertion that out of Christ there is no mental, moral, or spiritual illumination for men, and that all any man has, whether recognised or not, is of Christ.

Coming, to be referred probably to the initial clause. (The true light . . . was coming, etc.) A definite statement of the Incarnation as to fact only in the eternal idea of it (ver. 14 as to mode). Hengstenberg has some good remarks about the frequency with which the Messiah is denominated *The Coming One*. Especially see Mal. iii. 1 f.; so, "Art Thou He who should come?" Matt. xi. 3. Read, therefore, "the true light which lighteth every man was coming (*imperfect = was on His way*) into the world," referring not to His birth merely, but to His manifestation as Saviour. See iii. 19 and xii. 46. "The footsteps of Christ coming are heard all along the way" (Rainy, p. 68, *Cunningham Lectures*). He was the true light, therefore, before He appeared in flesh. The *world*, the *kosmos*, used to denote (1) this ordered creation, (2) mankind, (3) as the influence strongest in men = darkness, and so often with John. The word is very frequent with John, meaning "the impious futility of the human race." Observe the frequent phrase, "Christ coming into the world," and all it implies, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8.

10 f. The twofold development of Faith and Unbelief is here sketched. Note the tragic element in this. *To His own* things and "His own

12 and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even people.*"

The world at large did not recognise that its Creator was in it. But, more amazing blindness, His own people, the Jews, though seeing Him, did not acknowledge His claims. The guiltiness is greater in the second case. Cp. xix. 11. This is the chief instance of the *darkness* in the world. Cp. ver. 5 and xvii. 25: "The world hath not known Thee." It is tempting to take ver. 10 as referring to the general immanence of the Eternal Word in the kosmos before His incarnation, an idea eloquently expressed as follows: "Immanent yet personal, the life of all lives, the power of all powers, the soul of the universe; most present where there is most perfection,—He is more present unto every creature He hath made than anything unto itself can be" (*Munger*); but the parallelism of the writer, and the sequence after ver. 9 itself, are against this; and it is very questionable if the evangelist would have adopted such a line of thought. The perpetual wonder is the world's rejection of the Eternal Light. "We needs must love the highest when we see it, not Launcelot nor another," is only partially true in this region.

Note the rising of the thought in vers. 10 f.

Observe that His historic advent is so spoken of: *He was in the world.* He *came* to His own things. The kosmos was made through Him, but He is not part of it: so distinct from it as to be able to *come* into it. Yet *in* Him all things consist. "The world is not to Him," says Augustine, "as a chest to the carpenter who made it." "Whence came He," says Chrysostom, "who fills all things, and is everywhere present? What place did He empty of His presence?" [Calvin and Chrysostom and others hold ver. 10 to refer to preincarnate proofs of His Creatorship; such as Paul emphasizes in Rom. i. and ii.]

The Son of God came *first* as the Promised Messiah to the Jews and crown of the Revelation of God to Israel; His rejection by them might have been a stumbling-block had it not already been foretold in the prophets. See ch. xii. 38 ff. He could only come into the world as a Jew. Jesus is then identified as the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who had taken Israel to be a "peculiar people" to Himself.

Both on the part of the "world" and of "His own" a responsibility for not receiving Christ is implied, as well as a capacity for receiving Him. The difference between the *comprehend* of ver. 5 and *receive* of ver. 11 may bring more of moral import to the latter action.

12 f. *His own* ceased to be so by not receiving Him; hence, *As many as.* No matter who—whether "His own" or not. The grace is not limited now. The individual relationship takes the place of the national. "Received Him." The ability to do it is presupposed. On the *one* side they are those who believe (*and are believers*, i.e. their *enduring state*) upon His name. But on the other side they were begotten of God. Thus: to "receive Christ," to "believe upon His name," to be a "child of God," and "to be begotten of God," are virtually equivalent, though the becoming "a child of God" is put as their privilege who receive Christ. Does this being begotten of God cover all the process of faith? Can we co-ordinate the *receiving* and the *being born*? Cp. 1 John v. 1: "Every one that believeth . . . is born of God." There are the two sides—the Divine and the human; yet, as the figure of birth implies, God's grace anticipates man's act. *Power to become:* R. V. renders, "right to become." Both ideas may be

13 to them that believe on his name : which were born, not of included. God's preventer grace makes that possible which is impossible to fallen nature ; and He confers the right which we have lost. " Sons of God," rather " children." They became what they were not before, partakers of the life of God. The only place in the Gospel where this expression occurs ; often in 1 John iii. and following. In Rom. viii. the words *sons* and *children* are used alternately. In Gal. iv. *sons* ; Phil. ii. 15, *children*. The *sonship* or *childship* of believing men is one of John's great ideas, as is shown by his careful and elaborate explanation of it in this passage, and it is introduced here as the top and crown of their blessings who receive Christ. So 1 John iii. 1. What more could be than to become a *child of God*? The reciprocal relation of the *Fatherhood* of God is involved. This goes to the roots of John's theology.—The words *sons* and *children* express substantially the difference between Paul's and John's respective modes of regarding the relation of believing men to God. The Roman legal process of adoption, by which a man of his own free will constituted a stranger a son of his house, and conferred on him all powers, present and prospective, rules Paul's conception of a son of God. The indispensable spiritual and moral renewal he views as a recreation after the image of God which we once had, and lost. The communication of the very life of God is John's conception. So that while, according to the former, we think of our rights, according to the latter we think of our nature.

The question whether God can be called Father of all men alike, or of believing men only, is from this point of view unimportant. No doubt all are His children, because He made us, and stamped His image on us ; but, in ourselves, we are now prodigals who left the Father, forfeited our rights, and belie the nature originally ours.

" *Believing in His name.*" (Contrast the unique expression in 1 John iii. 23, " *Believe the name of His Son Jesus Christ.*") This phrase occurs above thirty times in the Gospel. For the difference between " *believing*" and " *believing in or on*," see ii. 11 and xiv. 11, 12. An O. T. idiom. Faith in or on = the receiving or resting on Christ as God has given Him to men for salvation, implying the intellectual belief, the moral attitude of trust, the outflow of the heart's affection, and the act of volition by which surrender is made of the whole man over to Him (iii. 15). The element of personal trust in a personal Lord is the strongest (see xx. 28), and this may be perfect when the complete intellectual conception of Christ is not so ; but the more perfect the apprehension of Christ, His person, and work, the more unreserved the pure committal of all to Him. *Name* = standing for all that makes God known. A man's *name* distinguishes him from others, and should indicate character and position, name and nature corresponding. God's name does so fully. Hence to believe in His " *name*" is to believe on Himself as known to us through the name He has revealed Himself by. Obviously it is a matter of revelation. God alone could tell men His name, what He wishes to be called, and why loved, served, and worshipped. (Cp. Ex. iii. 13 f., xxxiii. 19.) The name of Christ is also God's name, Christ's self-manifestation being also that of God (xvii. 6 and 26) ; so that to believe in His name is to believe in God's (xiv. 1). It is fitting that all who believe in His name, as Christ has at last fully disclosed it in the word *Father* (ch. xx. 17), should be " *sons of God.*"

Who were born. Made to share in the divine nature by the Holy Spirit of

blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but Christ. Faith denotes a marvellous spiritual change, going down to the roots of our character. Birth brings something new into existence. So with the Divine or New Birth.

Not of blood . . . God. The threefold negation is an emphatic exclusion of all human and earthly origin and influence in every shape,—descent, privilege, will-power or natural attractions. Not by ordinary birth or by force of will can any man become a child of God. (Cp. the Baptist's "God is able of these stones," etc.) The chief idea here is that of the free grace of the Saviour, who conferred this wondrous dignity on all who received Him, whatever their past was; and who, though they might not be able to say they were born of Abraham, yet could say they were *born of God*, in the very act and fact of their reception of Jesus. So that we may render thus: Though His own rejected Him, yet there were who received Him—who believed in His name—as the Christ of God. And to them He gave as reward the dignity and the rights of children of God,—even to those who, though never of the favoured descent of Abraham, though absolutely without any inherited or acquired qualification, have become the objects of Divine power and grace and love. They are children of God not in name or by outward calling, or by traditional privilege only; they are so by the transmission to them of God's own nature through His Son and Spirit.

Note on the term Logos.

In the text it is implied that it is not necessary to travel beyond the limits of the Old Testament itself to explain the evangelist's application of this term to the Son of God. Having learned to recognise in Him the eternal and complete revelation of God, he brought to the study of the Old Testament the light of his Master's character and work. To one who was prepared to find testimony to the Son as from the beginning the organ of Divine activity in creation and in self-disclosure to men, passages like the following would be filled with meaning. In Gen. i. the striking repetition of the clause, *And God said*; Ps. xxxiii. 6, *By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made*; Ps. cvii. 20, *He sent His Word and healed them*; the prophetic formula, *The Word of the Lord came to*, etc., Jer. i. 4, 11, ii. 1; Ezek. i. 3; Hos. i. 1; also cp. Isa. ii. 1, *The Word that Isaiah . . . saw*, with John xii. 41, *These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory and spake of Him*. We must also take into account what is said of those mysterious personalities, the Angel of the Lord and Wisdom, who could not fail to be identified by John with Messiah in these passages, Ex. xxiii. 20 f., *Behold, I send an angel before thee . . . my name is in Him*; Prov. viii. 22 ff., *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old*, etc.

It would be interesting, of course, could we find that the evangelist's views were in any degree influenced by contemporary modes of thinking on this subject; but this is not easy to determine. The utmost that can be said is this. In the Targums (Chaldee versions) great emphasis is laid on the WORD (*Memra*) as mediating between God and the world; and some approach is made in the direction of giving a personal subsistence to it. How far popular belief in Palestine in regard to the Messiah was affected by this fact it is not possible to say. In Alexandria, where Greek philosophy and Jewish religion came into touch, the results were embodied in the literature which sprang up in the Jewish communities, of which Philo is the most illustrious representative. In his writings the term and idea of the *Logos* have a prominent place;

14 of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among the Logos is the active Divine Intelligence, the Creative Word of God, the High Priest who makes intercession for the world ; but it has to be kept in view that in his use of the term, which signifies *Reason* as well as *Word*, Philo leans to the former interpretation ; he fluctuates between the ascription of personality and impersonality ; and he never refers to the Messiah. In short, his conception of the Logos is moulded chiefly on the lines of Greek speculation, and is intended not to bring God near, but to guard His remoteness from all material existence. The ideas and terms of the Alexandrian School of philosophy in general, and probably of Philo in particular, were prevalent through the civilised world in the age of the apostles, as the Epistle to the Hebrews testifies. The use of the term Logos by John may therefore in all probability have been suggested by the familiarity with it which men had through the influence of the current mode of thought ; and this supposition is confirmed by the striking fact that, with the exception of vers. 1 and 14 of ch. i., the evangelist applies the name to Jesus nowhere else in his Gospel. It is, however, one thing to borrow a conception, and another thing to borrow a phrase or term which can be made applicable to a conception already formed. And for the significance of this term Logos as applied to the Son of God, we are inevitably thrown back on the Old Testament itself ; perhaps, to some degree, on the line of interpretation developed in the Chaldee paraphrast. Nor should the effect of the gradually ripening consciousness among Christians as to the Person and Work of the Son of God be omitted. We have in this Gospel the last and mature stage of the growth which we see ripening in the Epistles to the Colossians and Hebrews (Col. i. 15 ff., ii. 9 ff. ; Heb. i. 2 ff.). The "Image" of the invisible God, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person [effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance], lead naturally up to "the Word." It will be borne in mind that when he wrote this Gospel, John was among those who were familiar with, not only the terms and ideas of the Alexandrian School, but also the teaching of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.

14. *And . . . flesh.* Further phase in the history of the "Logos" (vers. 1, 3 f., 9). The Logos, who was Creator and Revealer, became the Creature and the Revelation Himself. Obs. "and." *Became flesh* : a definite historic fact ; the *mode* is not said, "Ask not how, for it was made so as He knoweth" (Chrys.). He became something which He had not been before ; yet as it is implied that in "flesh" He revealed the life of God, He continued all He was. It was a voluntary act, not rendered necessary by any existing relation. And He came into flesh, not out of it. Human nature did not blossom into this flower ; flesh did not become the Word, but the Word became flesh. God and man are indissolubly linked in His Person. *Flesh* = human nature in its entirety, though viewed on its outward and material side, and as opposed to the Divine nature, suggesting what is changing, weak, frail, corruptible ; a use of the term borrowed from the Old Testament : not as Calvin, to indicate the *meanness* of the Incarnation—rather its reality and completeness. See 1 John i. 1 ; hence, *man* in full sense ; cp. 1 John iv. 2 ; 2 John 7 ; Rom. i. 3 ; and 1 Tim. iii. 16. The Logos became not a *man*, but *man*. John never employs the term in the ethical sense so frequent with Paul, of human nature determined by sin, and, under its influence, opposed to *spirit* (but see 1 John ii. 16). *Dwelt* or "tabernacled." Reference may be either to the permanent indwelling of the Divine Logos in humanity, or

us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

more probably to the temporary sojourn of the God-man on earth, under ordinary human conditions, and among those who, like the evangelist, were eye-witnesses. His presence was continuous, not fitful. As Calvin says: "Here for a season to do what was laid on Him to do—a sojourn, not a theophany." The *Logos*, becoming an inhabiter of human nature, was not changed or converted into flesh, but remained all He was before. The Greek word *skenoun*—to pitch tent, to take up abode, occurs in the New Testament in John's writings only (Paul uses a compound in 2 Cor. xii. 9, "that the power of Christ may *rest* = tabernacle, over me") here, and four times in the Apocalypse; where it is used *twice* of the dwellers in heaven, xii. 12, xiii. 6; and twice of God Himself, vii. 15, "He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them" (R.V.); and xxi. 3, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell [tabernacle] with them." The Greek word is the same as the Hebrew *shachan*, from which is derived the familiar term *shechinah*. According to the later Jews, this was the visible glory of God's presence (a cloud, or light in a cloud; cp. Matt. xvii. 5, "a bright cloud") resting above the cherubim on the mercy-seat, or filling the Temple. In the Targums, *i.e.* the Chaldee versions, *Shechinah* is often substituted for the name of God, in passages which speak of God dwelling among the people, and it is ascribed to the *Logos* and the Wisdom of God; in fact, the *Logos* and the *Shechinah* were all but identified. It was one of the five things which the second Temple lacked, and was to be restored when Messiah came, according to their interpretation of Ezek. xliii. 7, Zech. ii. 11, viii. 2, and like prophecies; so that we may regard the allusion as obvious, especially taken in connection with the idea of *glory* which follows. The *Logos* dwelling in flesh was the fulfilment of the line of great promises; in fact, the fulfilment of the end for which the old economy existed, that God should take up His permanent abode with men, and be their God, Ex. xxix. 27; Lev. xxvi. 11 f.; Ezek. xxxvii. 27; and see Rev. xxi. 3. Our Lord's human nature is the ark of the New Testament, uniting God and man for ever. *Among us*: *disciples*: familiar intercourse implied, 1 John i. 1 f. *And we beheld*: deeper than the mere *seeing*: we *contemplated*; so 1 John iv. 14. It was a historic fact, an object of sense-perception, yet faith went with it. See ver. 12 f.; also ch. xii. 37 f.

His glory. The "glory of the Lord" is a comprehensive term for all the visible signs which attended His self-revelation, proving Him to be great and infinitely exalted above created things. In one sense God's glory is simply His own Being, that He is what He is. In another sense it is the manifestation of Himself in sensible tokens, which He has been pleased to make from time to time to men. So that we might say, God's glory is all the greatness and goodness which are in God—displayed. Creation is such a display, Ps. viii. 1, xix. 1. But it is naturally in the history of Redemption, where God enters into personal relations with men, that the clear and full disclosure of His character is made. The idea of glory may have been at first attached to greatness and power, such as was exhibited in visible splendour at Sinai and subsequently (see Ex. xxiv. 17, xxxiii. 18-xxxiv. 7, xl. 34 and 38). It was suggested, however, by the name proclaimed in Moses' hearing: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious," etc.; that character lay behind power. Hence the glory of God became associated

with those moral attributes of grace, mercy, love, in which is the source of our salvation. Cp. Isa. xl. 5, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed," etc. The special *glory* beheld in Christ, John presently calls "grace and truth;" but superhuman power and knowledge were not excluded. See ii. 11, xi. 4, 40. For it lies in the conception that the inner beauty and perfectness of the Divine nature should have a corresponding expression. Compare Christ's appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 2), and in Patmos (Rev. i. 13 ff., and see ch. xii. 41). Observe the difference in the Pauline and Johannine points of view. To the former the Incarnation is a laying aside of the glory of God (see Phil. ii. 5 ff.); to the latter, a means of manifesting it. His glory was not therefore lost in flesh.

Glory as of the Only-begotten. Applied to Christ, this term is peculiar to John (iv. 18, iii. 16, 18, and 1 John iv. 9). It is used in Luke of an only child, vii. 12, viii. 42, ix. 38; cp. Heb. xi. 17. It is the rendering in the LXX. for "my darling," Ps. xxii. 20, xxxiv. 17 (Heb. = my only one); and for "desolate," Ps. xxv. 16; cp. the parallel expression in the Synoptics, "This is [Thou art] my beloved Son," Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 15, etc.; see also Ps. ii. 7 and lxxxix. 27. That Christ is so called because He is the dearest object of Divine affection is evident; but that a relationship to the Father, which is perfectly unique, and existing before His coming into the world, is also to be understood, goes without saying. He is as if God's one Son; all the other sons (ver. 12) are constituted so only because He gives them the power and right. Comparison with the Pauline word, "first-begotten," Col. i. 15, 18, Rom. viii. 29, Heb. i. 6, xii. 23 (Rev. i. 5), is interesting. "The two words express the same essential fact; but while 'only-begotten' states it in itself, 'first-begotten' places it in relation to the universe." (Lightfoot on *Colossians*.)

Glory as of—such as only He could have; therefore, such as the Father Himself has. He had the glory before coming here, xvii. 5, and is to have it again: a glory *just like* Himself; the appearance corresponding to the reality, and at last fully adequate to the purpose of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6; Heb. i. 1 ff. "*Of*" (lit. from) the "*Father*:" the preposition implying a *mission* from the Father rather than *derivation*, but not excluding this. Cp. on ch. vii. 29. On the word *Father*, see ver. 18. *Full of grace and truth*, referring back to the Word, who is personally the fount of all the grace and truth that have ever come to us from God. *Grace* is a term which John never uses except in these three verses (14, 16, 17) (also in 2 John 3; Rev. i. 4, xxii. 21, all, however, salutations). *Truth*, on the contrary, is one of his most frequent and characteristic words. Among the Greeks *grace* included the conceptions both of personal charm—outward and inward, and of a generous, open-hearted disposition. As used in the New Testament it is transfigured, and signifies the free, undeserved inclining of God to men, especially in the gospel of His Son; love uncaused by our love, mercy forgiving sins, and the free favour which takes no account of merit or demerit. Where Paul uses *grace*, John uses *love*. Where Paul says, Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, John says, God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should have life. *Grace* and righteousness on the one hand, love and life on the other. *Grace* keeps the eye fixed on the sinner; *love* thinks of nothing but oneness in the fellowship of Father and Son. The entire revelation of Christ was a revelation of grace; the grace which was personally in Him

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we

“ who, though rich, for our sakes made Himself poor,” and the grace which is the characteristic of the relation we are thereby brought into in respect of God, “ That we through His poverty might be rich.” *Truth* is not the faithfulness or veracity of God, but the perfect disclosure of His will for men, which is at the same time the disclosure of Himself (ver. 18). This is full, compared with the partial views given in the old economy (ver. 17); for all truth is embodied in Christ, who is the sum and substance of every prophecy, and therefore Himself “ the Truth ” (xiv. 6). And it is reality and light contrasted with the plausible falsehoods, the darkness of this world, viii. 12, 32; i John ii. 20 f. Hence also it is truth in the sphere of the will, *i.e.* holiness, as well as in that of the intellect; in a word, “ the inward unity of God’s life; ” not something speculative or abstract. “ Grace and truth,” therefore, embrace the great Johannine conceptions of Love, or Life and Light. In this combination we may, perhaps, find a link of connection with the frequent Old Testament expression: “ Mercy (or loving-kindness) and truth,” Ps. xxv. 5, 10, xxxiii. 4 f., lxxxv. 10, etc. etc., which rests in the Divine proclamation in Ex. xxxiv. 6, though “ truth ” in these passages refers rather to the attribute of faithfulness in God. So that “ grace and truth ” sum up the relations of Christ to men; He is full of grace for those who deserve nothing, and can claim and do nothing through sin; and He is full of truth for men who are dark and ignorant both in mind and morals. Truth is the light that exposes; grace the love that heals. See Rev. iii. 7.

15. *John—me.* Resumes from ver. 6, giving the final witness of prophecy and the Baptist’s true position with reference to Christ. This enigmatical mode of speech seems to have marked John’s utterances; cp. iii. 27-end. This testimony of John was delivered probably to his disciples at the time of the baptism of Christ (repeated also ver. 30), referring to his previous warning to the multitude that one was coming mightier than he, Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16. *He is preferred—lit.* has become—*before me; for He was before me.* My successor is my predecessor—a riddle solved only in Christ’s Godhead. *After me,* in point of time; *before me,* in point of influence and place; *for He was before me,* or “ first in regard of me,” or “ my first ” or “ chief,” in point of the pre-existence of His Divine nature, as the foregoing has shown. See viii. 58, xvii. 5; Col. i. 17. The humility and the knowledge of the Baptist are equally remarkable. The word “ cried ” is likely borrowed from Isa. xl. 3, in order to suggest the fulfilment of that prediction, although no doubt it was fact; the Baptist’s voice, as he preached in the open air to the crowds, still lingering in the evangelist’s ear. *Bears witness*—the present tense indicating its permanence and its importance. See on ver. 7. The Baptist could not have formulated an utterance regarding Christ such as ver. 14; but all that the evangelist says there is really implied in what the Baptist did say, for he was a student of the Old Testament, and had before him such passages as Mal. iii. 1 and others.

16. *And [For R.V.]—grace.* The evangelist resumes, adding the general apostolic and Christian testimony of experience to the Baptist’s.

17 received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by 18 Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man

The connection, if we adopt the reading of R.V., is : And with good reason did John say so ; for he himself, like every other servant, like all of us, received from the fulness of Christ ; cp. iii. 27. "Fulness" (i.e. of "grace and truth," ver. 14), in Greek = *pleroma*, a well-known term in connection with the Gnostic heresies, and which had probably already assumed a technical significance. The Gnostic teachers applied it to the totality of God's attributes ; which, however, they held were broken up and diffused through an endless series of mediatorial beings. In the Epistle to the Colossians accordingly Christ is presented as having the whole *pleroma*, the plenitude of God dwelling in Him, i. 19, ii. 9 ; while in the Epistle to the Ephesians the Church is presented as the *pleroma* of Christ, i. 23 ; of God, iii. 19 ; and the object of the Church, which is perfect man, is described as the measure of the stature of the *pleroma* of Christ, iv. 13. As Christ, then, has all the fulness of God, the Church has all the fulness of Christ, regarded in her great and glorious ideal. John in this passage throws both these thoughts together when he describes the Only-begotten as the personal fulness of Divine grace and truth ; and that fulness of Christ as the inexhaustible spring from which every Christian man draws. It will be kept in view that the readers for whom this Gospel and those Epistles were originally intended were the same. *We all received* : John looks back ; none of us but were indebted to Him, the best of us even. We were all empty vessels which He filled. The gifts of Christ are free and for all. *Grace in place of grace.* One measure of it going only to make way for a larger ; grace upon grace : grace unceasingly renewed. We received *Him*, ver. 12, and so received His fulness.

17. *For—Christ.* The force of the *for* lies in the obvious contrast between the two dispensations. The ministries of Moses and of Christ are put in opposition, "law" and "grace and truth." Paul contrasts the old and new economies in respect of the effects which law and grace exert respectively on men. The Epistle to the Hebrews contrasts them in respect of the personalities of their respective Mediators : Moses, the *servant* ; Christ, the *Son*, Heb. iii. 1-6. John also states the contrast in terms of the two Mediators ; adding, however, the characteristic features of their mediations. "The law" stands for the whole Old Testament dispensation generally : one of command and demand. Law required ; grace gives : law exposed and condemned sin, grace takes sin away and pardons it : law showed a partial glimpse of truth, it was a "shadow of things to come," Col. ii. 17 ; Heb. x. 1. Both grace and truth were in the old economy—in some measure ; the fulness could be only in "Him who is holy, Him who is true, Him who has the key of David." "Grace as the love of God communicating itself ; Truth as the inward unity of the life in God, i.e. love and holiness" (Neander).

Jesus Christ. Solemn statement of the great historic name ; and the only place in the Gospel where it occurs so. Perhaps it is not over-refining to hold that "Jesus" stands for "grace" and "Christ" for "truth"—He who fulfills all promise. Nor should the change of expression "given"—"came" (became) be passed over. For Christ is Himself the sum of God's gifts to us.

18. *No man—Him.* Conclusive proof of the "fulness" which is in Christ. He has "declared" the Invisible God to men. *God.* The

hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

word in Greek stands at the beginning of the verse, and is therefore emphatic ; and being without the article (see i. 1) we may render thus : " Godhead — none has ever seen." *No man* — not even Moses, Ex. xxxiii. 20 ; 1 Tim. vi. 16 ; see v. 37 and vi. 46 — *has ever seen*. 1. God is inaccessible to sense-perception : man cannot have visible fellowship with Him (1 John iv. 12 and 20), *i.e.* in His own original essence. Infinite Spirit cannot be the object of human vision, Deut. iv. 12. The theophanies of the Old Testament were symbols and no more, and disclosed at best but the " backparts " of God. His face was not seen. Our Lord's Divine glory was veiled in flesh. 2. God is, as pure, absolute, and unconditioned Being, incomprehensible by human reason, Job xi. 7 ; Isa. xl. 18, 28. " How He is — He only knoweth " (Chrysostom). That the idea of God's existence is natural to the human mind Paul maintains in Rom. i. 3. God as the object of intelligent and loving worship is not discoverable by man's unaided powers. This incapacity is culpable. Nature, conscience, and providence all combine in affording evidences of the being, power, goodness, and justice of God ; Rom. i. 19 f., ii. 14 f. ; Acts xvii. 24 ff. But the voice of natural judgment has been silenced by the voice of corrupt affections ; and what might have been known of God has been perverted and lost. 4. That knowledge of God which alone is adequate to inspire trust, love, hope, obedience, self-conquest, has never been the discovery of man, always the revelation of God Himself : at first, through fellow-men chosen and qualified by His Spirit, and in partial measures ; at last, through His only-begotten Son, in fulness, iii. 13 ; Heb. i. 1 f. At the same time, the fact that the idea of God is not the product of man's reflection and thought, but God's gift within him — the light, however dimmed by sin, of the glory of the Divine image, — establishes the truth on which John often lays emphasis, namely, the *kindredness* of God and man ; so that we reason from the features of our own personality — will, thought, purpose, feeling — to the same in God. It is God's own voice that awakens us from the sleep of sin ; but if we had no ear to hear, that voice would call in vain. The capacity for God is the most fundamental of all our endowments ; and yet Christ only can rescue it from waste, and unfold it into perfect exercise and fruit. See viii. 47, xviii. 37 ; Matt. xi. 27 ; cp. also Matt. v. 8. To see God had been the passionate yearning of the noblest souls, Ps. xxvii. 4 ; Job xxii. 3 ; Ps. civ. 4, lxiii. 1 ; Ex. xxxiii. 18. They felt their need of Him in a relation personal, sympathetic, and permanent — a daily presence ; and they knew their prayers would be answered some day. Ps. xvi. 11, xvii. 15. *Who is.* The participial form expressing a timeless enduring relation. For John wishes to say not merely where Christ is *now*, but where He is and ever has been : His own natural and eternal place. Change of state made no difference. See iii. 13. *In the bosom* : lit. " into," a striking phrase, recalling i. 1 ; both metaphor and fact ; suggesting the tender, intimate relation between children and parents, or bosom friends, xiii. 23. Such relation is implied in the fact that He is the Only-begotten ; a relation of closest fellowship in knowledge and love. If we are to press the literal meaning of the preposition " into," it would suggest the eternal *inclining* of the Son to the Father's heart, Prov. viii. 30. It is a sphere of existence in which no mere

man can be, and impossible to be distinguished from that of Godhead. Hence the Son's ability to "declare" God. See vi. 46. *The Father.* "Father" and "Son" are two key-words of this Gospel. The expression "the Father," or "my Father," occurs upwards of a hundred times, and is the common appellation for God on the lips of Christ (never "Our Father"). The name, "the Son," or "the Son of God," occurs about twenty times: "Son of man" rather less frequently; the most frequent designation of our Lord being "Jesus." As the Son is no other than the Logos and Only-begotten, it is plain that this name describes His eternal, necessary, and essential relation to God; one of derivation and of likeness, existing independently of His taking flesh, and unaffected by change of condition. The "Son" in God, therefore, implies the "Father." "By the same steps by which we prove the *second* Person to be the Son, the *first* is proved to be the Father." We may not be able to prove absolutely that John called Christ "Son" in reference to this pre-existence; but that we may properly so apply the name is beyond doubt: otherwise the Fatherhood in God would not go down deep into His very essence. It is the Sonship of Christ which enables Him to know the Father and reveal the Father. The glory which He had with the Father before the world was (xvii. 5), could have had no sublimer expression than is implied in these words, "The Son who is in the bosom of the Father." By assuming our nature Christ became Son of man, but did not cease to be Son of God.

As the Sonship of Christ is the fundamental truth of the Epistle to the Hebrews, *the revelation of the Father through the Son* is the fundamental truth of this Gospel. The Son is the living embodiment of the Father; to see the Son is to see the Father. The Father has given to the Son to have life in Himself, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. The relation of life, of love, of knowledge, and of work is unique. The Son lives by the Father; the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; the Father and the Son are one thing; the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father; the Father shows the Son all that He does, and the Son does nothing but what He sees the Father do; the Father has put all things into the Son's hands, and the Son can do nothing of Himself; the words He speaks and the works He does are the Father's words and works. All things that are the Father's are the Son's; "all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine." On Christ's first recorded public appearance He uses the words "My Father's house;" and the first message to His disciples after His resurrection was, "I ascend to my Father and your Father." And with significant emphasis in His great intercessory prayer (xvii.), twice over He sums up His work in the words, "I have manifested (declared) Thy name unto them." To worship the Father is the highest form of communion with God (iv. 21, 23). To know God as Father is the last and most perfect knowledge of God, and it is made possible only through the Son. For all that the Fatherhood of God means is disclosed in the life and death of the Son. The Son has been sent for this purpose by the Father; He has come not in His own name, but in His Father's name. The relation of God as a Father to men is hinted at in a very general manner in the Old Testament, where the power, and majesty, and unapproachable holiness of the Divine nature occupy the chief place (cp. Ps. xcix. 3, "Thy great and terrible name; for it is holy"). But all that the name *Father* suggests of love, of tenderness, of sympathy, of care to the uttermost, of sweet personal relationship with the child, it is the peculiar glory of the New Testament to exhibit. For, like the

doctrine of immortality, the Fatherhood of God could not be fully unfolded until by the death of Christ all that was meant in the Father's love was displayed ; the love which went out still to rebellious children, and was alluring them back by submitting to the penalties which their rebellion had incurred. So that there lies in the very name "Father" the whole essence of the Gospel. "Fatherhood" means love, and God is Love. Through the Son we are brought into filial union and communion with God, like His own (under what conditions and with what limitations, ver. 12 f. make clear) ; than which no higher blessedness can be dreamt of for men : "The glory Thou gavest me I have given them ;" "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." And see 1 John iii. 1. Hence Christ as Son makes God known, and there is nothing greater in God than His Fatherhood. Hence Christ as Son makes man's destiny known, for there is nothing greater for man than to be a son of God.

He hath declared Him. The pronoun is emphatic = He, and none but He. "Hath declared," see Luke xxiv. 35 and Acts xv. 12, 14, for the same word, *lit.* "expounded." The Son is the Father's expositor or interpreter. The object of the verb is omitted in Greek, as is seen by *Him* being in italics. That this is correctly supplied by A.V. and R.V. is obvious. The Son has declared God through the name of Father. Not to science or philosophy do we look for the truth about God and our connection with Him, but to a life once lived in this world.

NOTE.—In the margin of R.V. "only-begotten *God*" is inserted as read by many very ancient authorities. Westcott and Hort adopt it, and reject the other. Evidence for and against is carefully weighed by Scrivener (*Introduction*, p. 525), with an explanation of the ease with which in the oldest codices a change in a letter would make the change in sense. Scrivener inclines to the received reading, and quotes Alford's sound verdict, "We should be introducing great harshness into the sentence, and a new and (to us moderns) strange term into Scripture, by adopting *God*," etc.

The Prologue as a whole.

All that could be known of the origin of the earthward appearance and human nature of our Lord had been recorded by Matthew and by Luke. It remained for John to show what lay back of all that appeared, and without which the life, character, sufferings, and death of Jesus had been an inexplicable phenomenon. He shows that "that Holy Thing" born of the Virgin Mary was no other than the eternally pre-existing Divine Word. Accordingly this starting-point is not the historic beginning, but the timeless beginning, when the very same Personality who appeared in the man Christ Jesus existed in a fellowship of equality with God. The Word is described first in relation to God, then in relation to creation generally, then in relation to the moral creation, *i.e.* man, lastly, as assuming human nature and living among men as one of themselves. As God's Word He is essential to all divine revelation, and has been, in fact, the organ or agent through whom God's thoughts and plans have been achieved. He has revealed God's power in creation. He has revealed God's righteousness in man's conscience, and His truth in man's reason. Finally, He has revealed God's love and Fatherhood in His own personal manifestation on earth. The Revealer became the Revealed : the Only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. Just as truly as the term "Son" implies "Father," and admits us to a perception

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

of the inner relations of the Persons of the glorious Godhead, so truly does the term "Word" imply "thought;" a mind capable of communicating itself, God speaking, and not shut up in impossible isolation. John is not speculating; his object is entirely practical; it is to show how the Lord and Master, with whom he and his fellow-disciples had fellowship, on whose breast he had himself in loving friendship reclined, was Eternal God; and that in Him the whole fulness of God's life, and truth, and love had come down from heaven and poured itself out in blessings for men. In this prologue, therefore, we have the keynote of the Gospel: Jesus Christ in Person the fulness of divine good for men; Jesus Christ the complete and final expression of God's thought and will; Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son making known the Father. Universal creation consists in Him: life and light stream out from Him; and love, which is the origin, reason, and end of all things. As the Word, therefore, He has revealed God's thought, and as Son God's love by becoming flesh. The reason why the Eternal Word must assume flesh is implied in the existence of darkness, which would not comprehend the light of God. He came to conquer it, but so dense is the darkness that many did not and do not receive Him as the light of life; while to all who do receive Him and believe in His name as the revelation of the Father and His love to His prodigal children He gives the right to become sharers in the sonship which is His life. This prologue is therefore a summary of John's Gospel, and every statement made in it is verified in the course of the narrative. Christianity is Christ. The Gospel is Christ. To receive Him is life. To be in Him is to be in the fellowship of the Father, one with Him for ever. Christ is absolute Truth. Christ is perfect love. To have Him is to "have the Father and the Son." For the carpenter's son is the Word of God. Here is the mature apostolic consciousness, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, of the person of the Saviour.

II. THE HISTORY OF CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION OF HIS GLORY AS THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON.

a.—IN PUBLIC, i. 19–xii.

1. *The Baptist's Testimony*, i. 19–36.

i. 19–36. *Testimony of the Baptist.* First (19–28), to the official messengers from the Jews in Jerusalem, *i.e.* the Sanhedrim=chief ecclesiastical court of the Jews, wielding authority over Jews everywhere. It consisted of seventy men (as the name signifies in Aramaic), and in origin reached back to the seventy elders on whom the Spirit of God rested at Moses' request, though *formally* only to the times, probably of Ezra. The president was the High Priest for the time. Second (29–34), to the same, possibly his own disciples and others, with Christ before him. Third (35 f.), to two disciples.

19 ff. *Record or witness*, something resting on personal experience, iii. 11, v. 33. *The Jews.* John writes at Ephesus, and after the fall of Jerusalem. The expression, however, deepens into an ethical significance =

20 And he confessed, and denied not ; but confessed, I am not
 21 the Christ. And they asked him, What then ? Art thou
 Elias ? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet ?
 22 And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art
 thou ? that we may give an answer to them that sent us :
 23 What sayest thou of thyself ? He said, I *am* the voice of one
 crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord,

the hostile party, cp. ii. 6, 13, v. 1 ; Rev. ii. 9, iii. 9, etc. *Priests and Levites* (note the precision of statement), of whom the Sanhedrim was largely composed ; Sadducees chiefly, the superior and inferior ministers of the Temple, who would naturally and properly inquire into a new religious movement engrossing all minds, especially when the speedy arrival of the Christ was looked for. The scribes, who made the law their study, were mostly Levites. The Baptist's father was a priest. The Pharisees in the Council (ver. 24) may have been the movers. Why they had delayed so long to express interest officially in John's work may be explained by the reluctance of ecclesiastical bodies to take notice of movements beyond their own lines ; and why they do so now, by the altered tone in John's preaching after he had baptized Jesus, and by what men were saying of him. It was time to do something when men were speculating if he were not the Christ, especially when he had disparaged their order and beliefs, Matt. iii. 7. Their question implied, *Thou art not the Christ ?* For, knowing that John was of the tribe of Levi, they could not suppose the Baptist to be Christ, and put their question in such a form. Hence, *John admitted it, and did not deny it, but, etc.* He might have been tempted to magnify himself, but did not. The emphatic expression may point to the later errors of the partisans of the Baptist. *I am not the Christ.—Elijah ?* cp. Mal. iv. 5. The Jews expected Elijah to reappear bodily, to announce salvation, to anoint the Christ, and to solve difficulties in the law ; they also believed that he would discover himself by special sign to the Sanhedrim. The Baptist was Elijah in the sense of the prophecy, not in the sense of the men who asked the question ; cp. Matt. xi. 14. Whether the Baptist fully as yet realized that he was fulfilling this prophecy of Malachi can hardly be doubted. The idea that Malachi's prophecy requires an actual coming, held by the Fathers, adopted by Ryle, and considered an open question by Trench, belongs to an antiquated style of interpreting prophecy, although even Westcott favours it. The point is really settled by our Lord, Matt. xvii. 12. One to do an Elijah-work was foretold (Luke i. 17), not the reappearance of Elijah himself. *The prophet*, foretold Deut. xxviii. 15 ; understood, rightly or wrongly, of some definite individual, and not of the whole prophetic order, and discriminated from the Christ usually—though opinion fluctuated, as cp. vi. 14 and vii. 40 f. Jeremiah was called so. See Matt. xvi. 14. The denials grow shorter in form, as from one who had no taste for such personal questions. The Baptist was a true minister of Christ ; it was Christ, not himself, whom he held forth. 23. The Baptist applies to himself, by free quotation from the LXX., the words of Isa. xl. 3. The chapter was probably understood in a Messianic reference by the Jews. He may have believed they pointed to him, at least they were descriptive of his office and work. Referring originally to the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, and under a fine image to the pioneering of a pathway through all

24 as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were
 25 of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him,
 Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias,
 26 neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize
 with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye

hindrances for the Lord's redeemed, they find a higher fulfilment in the spiritual deliverance effected by Christ. *A voice*, "Thou art to me no bird, but an invisible thing, a voice, a mystery." The Baptist recognised (Luke i. 17, 76) his mission as that of preparation for the Christ. Who he was himself did not signify; but whom he prepared the way for. The state of the Jewish people was a spiritual desert. They did not know what kind of a Messiah they really needed, did not know what their need was—what His deliverance must be. They considered He was coming to them because they deserved Him, whereas His coming is only to those who confess their ill-desert. The way of the broken heart is alone the straight way for the Saviour.

24 ff. *From the Pharisees* (R.V.). Not unimportant to remark, because the dominant faction among the priests at this time was Sadducean, and would not have cared to put the question that follows. The Pharisees were the highly religious party, and most popular, who also set store by washings (Mark vii. 3),—the reason probably why they at once challenge him for unauthorized performance of religious rites, passing from his person to his work. They wished to know in what capacity he baptized, and how he related himself to the established order of things in their religion. They regarded his baptism as the setting up of a claim on the people, constituting him a religious or national leader. And John, in reply, again passes over himself as of no consequence,—not disparaging his office, but pointing to and exalting the person of Christ, thus answering their question indirectly. *I*, emphatic, *with water* only, "which is the mere outward symbol of the real baptism that is not in my power." The relation of John's baptism to Christ's is that of type to antitype. The "water" represents the whole cleansing efficacy of Christ, as the sacrament of baptism in the Church does; the cleansing away of sin from the penitent, and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost. John's sphere was the outward, Christ's is the hidden man of the heart. Note the double side—the cleansing and the bestowing. See iii. 5. At the same time there is the contrast intended between Repentance and Faith,—if such can be,—or that lying between preparatory turning from sin and full acceptance of Christ. Cp. Ezek. xxxvi. 25 ff., where the gift of the Spirit follows the cleansing with water. (Cp. Matt. iii. 11 and Luke iii. 16, where the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire—a more thorough purgative—is ascribed to Christ.) "What I do is small in comparison with what *He* will do, whose herald I am, and nothing else; and for whom I am unworthy to do the meanest service." To carry and loose the shoe was the most menial office in the East. The shoe was a mere sole tied on to the foot by leather fastenings. It was usual for disciples to do this office to their Rabbi. *In the midst of you, ye know not*, suggesting as contrast, "but *I* know Him, hence I do what *I* do,"—an outward ignorance that deepened into inward. They knew not Christ was so near. They knew Him not still when He presented His claims to them, ver. 11. John's word became sadly prophetic. Bear in mind that Jesus had been, a month previously at least, baptized by John. (Read as in R.V. in ver. 27, "Even He who cometh

27 know not ; he it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before

after me," and omit "is preferred before me.") The origin of baptism as a rite is obscure. Whether the baptism of proselytes dates prior to this time is doubtful. Not the rite itself is questioned, but John's authority to dispense it. There was in their minds a connection between this rite of baptism and the inauguration of the Messianic dispensation ; but why so is not so clear. (Cp. Ezek. xxxvi. 25 ff., xxxvii. 23 ; Zech. xiii. 1 ; Mal. iii. 2 f.)

Sadducees and Pharisees.

The Sadducees, who probably derived their name from Zadok, the ancestor of the higher priesthood (1 Kings ii. 35 ; Ezek. xl. 46), came to be the incumbents of the chief temple offices, and esteemed themselves representatives of the bluest Jewish blood. In our Lord's day they were a "dominant, priestly, and magisterial class ;" defenders of their party privileges, and kept themselves aloof from popular sentiment. They accepted nothing but the written law of Moses as obligatory ; and, having the blessedness of possession, they set small store on the hopes and promises of Israel that centred in the coming Messiah King and kingdom of God. Disbelieving in the morality that is based on fear of penalty and hope of reward, they held principles which naturally led to their general doctrinal position as given in the New Testament ; "they said that there was no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit." They were also devoted adherents of the government of Herod, believed in things as they were, and had an abhorrence of religious zeal. They may therefore be called the aristocratic party, in contrast with the other great party, who were their bitter antagonists, the Pharisees. This sect seems to have been so designated from a term literally signifying separatists, probably because of their strict piety, and their attitude of repugnance to Greek culture. They were the representatives of the democracy, as has been indicated, and grew round the important institutions of rabbinic school and synagogue. They maintained, along with the law, the authority of the traditions of the elders,—those glosses on the law uttered from time to time by their great teachers or Rabbis. To render themselves and the people independent of the priestly faction they instituted numberless ceremonials, such as washing of hands, pots, cups, etc., and other customs, which brought them under the lash of Christ's censure. Being identified with the people, more or less, they kept alive the faith in the rejuvenescence of national greatness to be achieved with the advent of the Messiah. The theocratic kingdom was the goal of their aspirations and of their efforts. They hated the Roman yoke, and were ever ready to foment rebellion or sow dissatisfaction among the people. They were "a piously inclined and inclining democratical party." Both these parties struggled fiercely for the ascendancy in the Council ; and as ultimately this was gained by the Pharisees, the political course was followed which led to the ruin of the nation. The terrible denunciations of this party by our Lord, contrasted with His silence regarding the Sadducees, is explicable not because their tenets were more pernicious, but simply because they were more widely spread, and met Christ's doctrine at every point as a religion of forms and ceremony and show. The Sadducee lived in a haughty isolation from popular feeling and desire, and was cold in religious matters. The Pharisee was in the stream of national life, and ruled it ; and, as to religion, compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. Both parties appear in the page of

28 me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the

history in the times of the Maccabees, the second century before Christ. It will be noted that the term Sadducee nowhere occurs in John, probably owing to the fact that as a party they had completely lost prestige, and even name, before and after Jerusalem's fall.

28. *Bethabara*, or *Bethany* as in R.V.; probably two names for the same place. The Roman war blotted out the names of many places, so that the latter was lost in the former; the former meaning ferry-house, and the latter boat-house; see Judg. vii. 24. The site was probably near Jericho, on the route travellers would take going eastward. A Roman road led through Jericho, and was continued on the farther side of Jordan by Heshbon. The road, possibly, which our Lord took when going and returning from the wilderness where He was tempted. The choice of the spot may have been determined on this account; perhaps also with some reference to the crossing, about the same place (if not the very same), of the Israelites under Joshua. There may have been in John's mind the idea of a new repentant nation again passing through the river to possess the land, and so prepare for their Messiah-King. What the result of this testimony on the minds of the deputies, or those who sent them, was, we are not told; cp. iii. 25 f. They were at least warned of the actual presence among them of One greater than the speaker, whom they could not but take to be the Messiah.

29-34. Second testimony of the Baptist. Christ is seen approaching. It is not said in whose presence this is made,—probably his disciples were with him, and the deputation from Jerusalem. The appellation of Christ would in this case be very fitting.

On the morrow, the day after the deputies had examined him, *he seeth Jesus coming unto him* (omit "John," R.V.). Jesus was returning from the wilderness where He had been tempted. It was indispensable that He should begin His ministry with the Baptist's seal of recognition. It was as if the combined testimony of the old dispensation was saying through John: Lo, He comes of whom it is written in the volume of the book. *Behold the Lamb of God*, etc. The name is remarkable. The definite article conveys the meaning = the *expected* Lamb of God,—as if to say, Here is at last what we have been looking for! Ps. xl. 6 and 7. Whence did John derive the name? Opinion is divided between Isa. liii. and the institution of the Passover Lamb, Ex. xii.; and good reasons can be adduced for both. In Isa. liii. 7 occurs the passage, "He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter;" and repeatedly throughout the chapter the fact is stated that the sufferings of the Servant of the Lord were on account of the sins of men, and were the means of taking them away (vers. 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12). It is true that the image of a lamb is merely subordinate, and is used simply to present the submissiveness of the Sufferer. Still it is natural to believe that John must have thought largely on this section of the Book of Isaiah, as his description of his own function was taken (ver. 23) from the opening words of ch. xl. And the whole section — chs. xl.-lxvi. — was understood by the Jews to be

Messianic, however little the impression of a Vicarious Sufferer took hold of their minds. On the other hand, John was the son of a priest, and we may suppose that, in a priestly home like that of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Messianic hopes would be expressed in the line of the sacrificial institutions of the old economy; and although the Passover and the thought of taking away the sin of the world do not at first appear to coincide, yet (1) the chief place which the Passover held among the ceremonies of the Old Testament; (2) the suggestion of the need for a new departure, a redemption like the old (witnessed to in the fact of John's baptism); (3) the fitness of the lamb over the other sacrifices as type of the Messiah,—*if any sacrifice at all* were regarded as a type,—may not unreasonably be held as sufficient ground for referring the origin of this name to the Passover institution. Besides, this annual feast was at hand (ii. 13). Cp. also this evangelist's own comment, xix. 36,—an important side-light,—as well as the whole section in ch. vi., observing especially how ver. 4 bears on ver. 51 ff. (One could hardly find the analogy in the lamb offered as a burnt-offering every morning and evening, much less in the case of the trespass- or sin-offering mentioned in Lev. v. 6, where a *female* lamb was appointed.) If it is said that expiation of sin was not connected with the Passover lamb, as with the offerings on the Great Day of Atonement, that is rather a question of the *mode* in which expiation was presented, the sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts having scarcely any other signification conceivable. Remember also how John had said already (Matt. iii. 10) that there was danger imminent, from which men needed to be set free. Whatever view we may take of the origin of the name, and it matters little, it is more interesting to trace the growth in the Baptist's mind of such an idea as the name indicates. The difficulty which arises in connection with John's use of such a phrase to denote Christ lies in the fact of the current notions about Him running so much in another channel. What might be intelligible later on, after the crucifixion (see 1 Cor. v. 7; cp. ch. xix. 36; 1 Pet. i. 19, and Rev. v. 6, 8, etc. etc.), seems perplexing at this early date. That the Messianic time was to be a time of special and conclusive Divine forgiveness is clear from the O. T., and it was expected by the Jews to be such. But the appearance of the Messiah was to be regarded as equivalent to that forgiveness itself. That God had sent Him was *ipso facto* God's pardon. It was not understood that He had to achieve forgiveness. And when the Baptist began his ministry, his own conception of the Messiah was the same—with this important difference, that the nation being unworthy to have such a Messiah must get itself ready to receive Him. It was defiled with sin, and the Messiah could rule over only a cleansed and repentant people. In harmony with this was John's first announcement of Christ, “the mightier than I,”—one who would not endure the presence of sin or sinners,—and his consequent appeal to his hearers to prepare themselves for His approach. But how were they to prepare? How were they to be truly cleansed from sin? Had the Messiah come simply to save the clean and judge the unclean? If the Baptist did not allow any earnest soul to remain under the delusion that forgiveness would be his, and the Messiah his, and Messiah's kingdom his, because he was a Jew,—the question remained unanswered, How could he become one whom the Messiah would accept? Would it not occur to John as his work went on, as he learned the needs of the men who came round him, that the Messiah must be one who should not only judge sinners, but be able to take on Himself their judgment, the burden of their sin; one who was not merely to sift the chaff from the wheat, but to make it possible for the chaff to be converted

into wheat? If so, after his first meeting with Jesus and the deep impression made on him by the strikingly humble demeanour of the One mightier than himself, the natural direction of his thoughts would be that here was One who had come, not to cast sinners away, but to take their sin as His own burden, to confess it before God, and to suffer for it. When such a conception was once awakened in John's mind, it would quicken in him the understanding of the plain allusions in the Old Testament,—especially in the portion of Isaiah already alluded to—to a remarkable Servant of the Lord who should suffer for others' sins, and would lead him to think of a new national and more than national redemption of which the old under Moses was a faint emblem. He does not now say, "Behold the One mightier than I, whose fan is in His hand!" but, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" We may freely admit at the same time, even while we remember that John must have enjoyed some special revelations of the Spirit of God (ver. 33), that the expression is remarkable both in itself and also as coming from the lips of the Baptist. To find the entire explanation in Ps. xxiii., as if John meant to convey his impression of Christ's character (as the author of *Ecce Homo* does, p. 6), is to trifle with Scripture exegesis. As the second clause is connected with the first, the conception can be nothing else than sacrificial. The meekness and gentleness of Christ is not the means by which He takes sin away; though, no doubt, in taking it away He displays a Divine humility. The idea of taking sin away by being meek as a lamb in the endurance of the evils and wrongs of the world was not Jewish at least; the only method with which they were familiar was that of expiation. *Of God*, of God's providing and appointment, as well as belonging to and devoted to God. A special relation to God is meant, and also a contrast is hinted with other lambs: "There is *God's Lamb* at last!" This is the only passage where this possessive occurs: never so in the Revelation.

Which taketh away the sin of the world, or "beareth" (as in margin); the same expression also in 1 John iii. 5, "He was manifested to take away [bear] sins." These are the only two passages where this Greek word (*airo*) is used in this connection with sin in the New Testament (cp. 1 Sam. xv. 25, LXX., translated "pardon"), (though the same idea occurs with another verb in Heb. ix. 28, 1 Pet. ii. 24, as in Isa. liii. 4, 11, 12). The word passes through the several grades of meaning: to take or lift up, to bear or carry a burden so lifted up, to bear or take away, Matt. xvi. 24, "Let him *take up* his cross;" Mark ii. 12, "He *took up* the bed and went forth," etc.; ch. xx. 1, "She seeth the stone *taken away*," etc. Even if we confined the meaning stringently to this last,—to "take away,"—it is obvious that when sin is the object alluded to, removal must take place by the Lamb of God taking sin upon Himself as a burden, and bearing all its consequences. To bear sin is the *method*; to take it away, the *result* of Christ's sacrifice. To "bear sin or iniquity" is a well-known O. T. expression; see Lev. xxiv. 15; Num. v. 31, xiv. 34; Ezek. iv. 5, "Whoso curseth his God shall bear his sin;" "This woman shall bear her iniquity;" "Each day for a year shall ye bear your iniquities;" "So shalt thou bear the iniquities of the house of Israel," etc., which is susceptible of only one interpretation, namely, to incur the guilt and to suffer the penalties of sin, and so to expiate it. Not the moral attitude of Christ to the sin of the world is meant, that He patiently endured it—its vileness, misery, and the like, and so cured human depravity; however true this may be, and important in its own place. But the essential thought is His relation to justice, which alone is wide enough to comprehend every other point of view.

30 world ! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man 31 which is preferred before me ; for he was before me. And I knew him not : but that he should be made manifest to

The sin of the world was laid on Him to be dealt with as law and justice required. He took it on Himself. His sufferings and death atoned for it ; see I John ii. 2, iv. 10 (v. 6), “the propitiation for our sins.” As the Passover lamb was substituted for the first-born, so God’s Lamb is substituted for the world of mankind ; cp. xi. 50. From this sacrifice flows forgiveness ; see I John i. 7, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleaneth us from all sin,” where the cleansing, as here, is not directly for the moral pollution of sin, but for its guilt. We can hardly credit John the Baptist with the fulness of dogmatic view possible to Paul or John the Apostle. But there are times when a man is inspired to speak truth that reaches out beyond his own comprehension, and at least we are sure that the Baptist felt this about the Messiah ; that, as God’s Lamb, He was to bear the brunt of sin in sacrifice so as to make it cease to be a burden and fear to men themselves, and to make it cease to be a cause of controversy with men and alienation from them on the part of God. *Sin of the world.* Sin is regarded as a unity, for all sins spring from the same root. Mankind are in an organic union. The sin of the world is the rejection by men of God’s will, and the penalty is death. Christ has borne this. *The world :* not the Jewish world only. The universal reach of Christ is one of the chief points in this Gospel, iii. 16 ff., iv. 42, xi. 52 ; cp. vi. 51 ; I John ii. 2. That the Baptist presented Christ’s work as of universal application, is not strange when we recall how he had spoken of the privileges of birth in which the Jews built hopes. “God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham,” Matt. iii. 9. And no Scripture is more universal in tendency than the portion of Isaiah from ch. xl.-lxvi. The questions how Christ sustains this relation to the world, and how He is able to take the world’s sin away, are answered in the progress of the Gospel, notably in ch. vi.

The testimony of the Baptist to Christ is thus brought to its highest and clearest. Christ is the sacrifice God has ordained and accepted as vicarious offering for the world, which is under the condemnation of sin : and His sacrificial death is the ground of hope and assurance of forgiveness for all men.

30. See ver. 15. John identifies the Person before him with the one of whom he had previously before the people and the legation testified. Not superfluous, when calling Him by so different a name.

31. *I knew Him not.* Therefore his testimony is disinterested and impartial. A previous meeting is implied. John had no personal acquaintance with Jesus ; nor does it appear that they met again after this occasion. *But that He should be made manifest*, etc. Although I had no personal knowledge of Him, yet my mission was to make Him known to Israel. *Manifest*—a favourite expression of this evangelist ; cp. ii. 11, xvii. 6, xxi. 1, I John i. 2, and throughout the Epistle : almost always used of the disclosure to men of the Divine glory in the first appearing of Christ (of the second coming, I John ii. 28, iii. 2 (?)). John’s peculiar ministry—especially the baptism—was fitted to excite, and did excite, in men’s minds inquiry as to its scope. Men were turned from the outward to the inward ; they were made to think of their unworthiness, and prepared to find what

32 Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven 33 like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not :

might go contrary to expectations, Acts xix. 4. *To Israel*: the first sphere for the fulfilment of the promises, and the limit of John's ministry.

32. John tells his hearers how he knew that the Person before them was the Christ. *John bare witness*. A definite act of witnessing, unlike that of ver. 15, which has a more general character. This relates to a special occurrence ; and the repetition of the word in the middle of John's testimony calls special attention to the statement. *I have beheld the Spirit descending like a dove from heaven ; and it abode on Him*, the Greek word for " beheld " implying a " certain intention, not an accidental look." John emphasizes two facts—(1) that he had seen the Spirit descending from heaven, and (2) that He abode on Jesus. The Perfect tense, " I have beheld," gives a marked solemnity to the fact. John and Jesus were probably alone : and what was seen was probably a spiritual vision. Had there been bystanders they might have seen, and yet *not* seen ; cp. ch. xii. 29 ; Acts ix. 7. The sign was meant for the Baptist alone ; cp. also 2 Cor. xii. 2. *Like a dove*, a vision—not a real body, of course. Luke says, " in bodily shape," iii. 22. See Matt. iii. 16 ; Mark i. 10. The dove—the emblem of gentleness, peace, love : a very different suggestion from that of John's figure—" fire." (Note the second Person of the Trinity under the symbol of a *Lamb* ; the third under that of a *Dove*.) The meaning is found in the life of Him who did not strive nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets ; 1 Pet. ii. 21 ff. ; Isa. xlvi. 2. The contrast, too, between the old and new economies is set forth. Cp. the first words of the Sermon on the Mount. The coming of the Spirit of the Lord *to* or *on* a servant of God in the old times was, more or less, in an element of violence. Here all is natural and peaceful. There was something uncongenial in the subject before (cp. Acts ii. 3). Here heaven recognises its own kindred. The Dove as emblem for the Holy Spirit is not found in the Old Testament, but the suggestion of the *brooding* action of the Spirit in Gen. i. 2 was remarked by the Rabbis. (Godet has a fine though rather fanciful note on the analogy of the Creation and New Creation embodied in Christ's humanity.) *It abode on Him*. The pronoun has the accent. John is pointing out the Person who became the dwelling of the Spirit. The human nature of the Son of man is the permanent dwelling of the Holy Spirit ; cp. iii. 34. So are all regenerate natures joined to His by faith ; 1 Pet. iv. 14, ch. xiv. 17 ; 1 John ii. 27, iii. 24. The Spirit *visited* men in former times. His operations were intermittent : He came and went, Num. xi. 25. Here He *abode* ; the outward fact being the type of the permanent union of heaven and earth (see ver. 51), of God and man : of the return to earth of grace, mercy, and peace in the Person of the Son of God, for as the Logos became flesh He had an infinite capacity for the Divine Spirit, iii. 34. Out of His fulness we all receive ; cp. vii. 38 f., also 2 Cor. vi. 16 ff. That Jesus was the Incarnate Word of God is proved by the descent of the Spirit on Him : and the latter is the result of the former. The Baptist was aware from such passages as Isa. xi. 2, xlvi. 1, lix. 21, lxi. 1, that the Messiah should be distinguished by a special bestowment of the Spirit of God ; and to this knowledge ordinarily derived was added an extraordinary communication from God, ver. 33, however granted : for such recognition must not rest on man's judgment, Matt. xvi. 17.

but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and

The descent of the Spirit on Christ at this time was therefore—1. A sign of His identity to the Baptist. 2. The public inauguration for His mission. 3. A seal to Christ Himself of His Father's acceptance, and fitting of Him for that mission. Not the assurance that He was all He was; but we must remember the need of a steady development of His human nature, so that just as (on an immeasurably lower plane) there are times when in ordinary men the spirit moves in them to finer issues: this was an epoch in Christ's personal history when He heard the call of God, and felt His power moving Him to the great work set before Him. Therefore the Spirit was not now given to Him for the first time. For, 4. The fact that in Him *alone* in the act of baptism such a testimony on God's part should have been given, which in truth denied in His case the need for a baptism of repentance as in other men, showed that He possessed the fulness of fellowship in the life of God. Hence also, 5. The visible pledge that the Spirit of God had permanently returned to man. Was the vision a symbol of a previous fact, namely, that the Spirit was already in His fulness abiding in the Son of God? or was it a symbol of a present fact, namely, of a present gift to Jesus of something which then came on Him for the first time? In dealing with the mysterious personality of our Lord, we have to balance one side of the truth against the other. If Jesus were the eternal Logos Incarnate, the Spirit was His as God's own life. Nothing could be added to Him, although there might be a vision in symbol to make apparent to others that which He already possessed. The reply of Christ to the Baptist, who felt by instinct that he was in the presence of one greater than man, and confessed his unworthiness to baptize Him ("Suffer it to be so now," etc.), hardly indicates lack of consciousness of what He was; rather is it the calm utterance of one fully aware of His own dignity, while waiving its claims.

On the other hand, if we are to attribute to Christ's human nature any natural sinless unfolding whatsoever, we must believe that this hour, when He was consecrating Himself to the great work which He came to accomplish, could not pass without the experience of an impulse, an energy, an elevation, fitting Him for all that lay before Him. We feel that we cannot say, consistently with facts, that He attained the full Messianic consciousness *only then*. But we feel also that the vision must have meant more than a mere symbol; must have been the accompaniment of an inward condition in our Lord's human nature, a condition which meant to Him the direct communication from His Father of assurance of Sonship, of love, of the bestowal of all needful Divine strength for the work. It was impossible for the Holy Spirit, who formed and sanctified our Lord's humanity, to be ever so absent from that perfect creature as to descend on it again. And yet it was equally impossible that, in devoting Himself to the work of the Father, there should be no response from heaven of Divine energy and confidence inspired by the Spirit of God.

33. John explains how, not having personal acquaintance with Jesus before they met by the Jordan, he nevertheless identified Him as Messiah. God had told him in special revelation by what mark He should be recognised.

He who sent me to baptize. John's mission was not of man, but of God (Mark xi. 30 ff.). He was instructed in the circumstances attending his birth and consecration to God's service; and the Spirit directly moved him

remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the
34 Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the
Son of God.

when the time came. It seems to have been John's way to speak in this indefinite manner, "He that," etc. ; see vers. 15, 30, and ch. iii. 29-36. *He said to me: i.e.* no other than God Himself. The descent and abiding of the Spirit should be the sign of the Christ ; and Christ is called, *He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit*, Matt. iii. 11 ; Mark i. 8 ; Luke iii. 16. Christ gives of what He received in fulness : a more apt sign could not be. The Divine fountain of life was in Him, and He immerses our human nature in it, vii. 39. This latter was the most determinate feature of the Christ in John's conception at first. What did he understand by Baptism with the Holy Ghost ? a purgation by *fire*, as his own was by *water* ? Such a purifying work was at least embraced in his conception of the Christ : "His fan is in his hand." But why, when pointing Him out now to his disciples, did he not say : Behold Him who baptizes with the Holy Spirit ? (see on ver. 29). Probably he was conscious of the true order ; of what was cause and what was result, and it was well to point out that the same Person did both. The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, also baptizes with the Holy Ghost : the former is the means to the latter : forgiveness of sins precedes the bestowal of the Spirit as the cross preceded Pentecost. For the essential feature of the future kingdom of God in the Old Testament is Baptism with the Holy Ghost, Isa. xliv. 3 ; Joel ii. 28 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 27 ; Jer. xxxi. 31 ; in invariable connection with the forgiveness, or cleansing away of sin, and the repentance which attends this. These are, strictly speaking, but the two sides of the same great Divine act : the negative side and the positive ; or the means and the end. For the possession of the Spirit in the Old Testament signified special nearness to God and fellowship with Him : knowledge of His will, and conformity to it in the heart. The prayer of Moses, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them !" finds fulfilment in the New Testament. But fulfilment only through the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of each one who receives the Holy Ghost. (How can the statement here be reconciled with the account of the meeting of John and Jesus in Matt. iii. 14, where John recognises Christ before the descent of the Spirit ? Not by qualifying the assertion of John so as to make him mean he had only a partial knowledge of Jesus before. He must often have heard of Jesus of Nazareth, but had never met Him. It was not impossible for the Baptist to conjecture that Jesus was the Christ, apart from the supernatural sign that followed the Baptism ; for (1) he was in continual expectation ; (2) the multitudes had come and gone (Luke iii. 21) ; (3) the very demeanour of Jesus we can believe had something impressive in it : these things must convince John that this at last was the One for whom he was preparing the way. But certain he only could become by the descent of the Spirit.)

34. *And I [for my part] have seen, and have borne witness.* An expression frequent in John's writings, ch. iii. 11 and 32, xix. 35 ; 1 John i. 1 ff. A witness, once for all, that remains firm and enduring ; John realizing that he here crowns his mission. If the deputies were present, this was a testimony that made them excuseless for unbelief. *That this is the Son of God.* Observe the variety of designation for Christ, vers. 29, 33,

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his dis-
36 ciples ; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith,

and here. Why, again, should John use this phrase for Christ ? It was suggested probably by the voice that sounded from heaven, Thou art my beloved Son, etc. (Mark i. 11). "Son of God" was a familiar designation for the Messiah. It was founded on the promise made to David regarding his posterity in 2 Sam. vii. 14, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son ;" and it is nothing but the echo of that promise which we find in Ps. ii. 7, lxxxix. 27, Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6, where the conception of sonship of God is applied to the anointed king. In this application the truth intended would obviously be the peculiar relation of nearness, tenderness, sympathy, community of interest between God and the king ; on the one side fatherly care, on the other childlike duty and dependence. It was natural that the conditions of such a relationship should come through the disappointing history of Israel to be referred to the hoped-for Davidic King—the Messiah who should implement all Divine promises. So we find the term used by those possessed of unclean spirits (Mark iii. 11, v. 7), and by the High Priest (Matt. xxvi. 63). But with this restricted application to the Messiah there arose before the time of Christ by degrees a fuller significance in the designation ; or perhaps we should say, the fuller significance already lodged in it by the spirit of prophecy, was unfolded and ripened after Christ's appearing, death, and resurrection, to the perfect flower and fruits which we see in vers. 14 and 18 of this chapter. That the Baptist or Nathanael (ver. 49) saw this fulness is a different question, cp. iii. 35 f.

(It would seem that it was not an unfamiliar custom for the Semitic peoples to call their kings by titles implying that they were Heaven's favourites, as at the present day the Emperor of China is known as "Son of Heaven." Custom will provide occasion for the employment of a term, but cannot curtail the width of its application.)

Observe the climax, apparently intended : Lamb of God—taking sin away and the old life in sin ; the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost—giving the new Divine life and Divine purity ; Son of God—giving power to become sons of God.

35. *Again the next day.* The recollection was vivid as to minute particulars. "Great days" (Bengel) ; "A regular diary" (Hengstenberg) ; *John was standing*, etc. The evangelist begins where he has personal knowledge, 1 John i. 1. Jesus drew the finest of His disciples from the youths that had drawn round John. This was a recognition of the Baptist's work, and of its importance in leavening the minds and hearts of susceptible men with the needful preparation for Christ. It was impossible that Christ could begin His ministry elsewhere, see ver. 23. Probably those always forming the first six in the lists (except in Acts i., where Bartholomew is put seventh) were the Baptist's disciples. As it was only after hearing that John was beheaded from the disciples who had remained with him that Jesus chose the twelve, it may have been that of the remaining six one or more had been also of the Baptist's company, and it may be inferred at any rate that those who "went and told Jesus" afterwards attached themselves to Him. The *two* referred to here were Andrew (ver. 40) and, no one can doubt, the evangelist himself, who, with his usual reserve, suppresses his own name.

36. Cp. ver. 29. Lange suggests that between the two days Jesus had come to an understanding with the Baptist—a very unlikely thing.

37 Behold the Lamb of God ! And the two disciples heard him
 38 speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and
 saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye ?
 They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being inter-
 39 preted, Master,) where dwellest thou ? He saith unto them,
 Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and
 abode with him that day ; for it was about the tenth hour.

2. *Call of the first Disciples*, i. 37-51.

37-end. The call of the first disciples. Goethe, *Torquato Tasso*, i. 1 : Ein edler Mensch zieht edle Menschen an, Und weiss sie fest zu halten. We have here the account of the way in which five disciples were brought to receive Christ. All came into personal connection with Him, but each in a way of his own, suitable to his own state of mind and feeling. The finding of the one was not the finding of the other. For John and Andrew there was the talk with Jesus through the hours of that never-to-be-forgotten evening. For Simon—the heart-searching word, convincing him he was known, and his future read off. For Philip—a peremptory command ; and for Nathanael—a gracious courtesy disarming him of prejudice, assuring him of a perfect sympathy in the breast of the Lord. Thus there are those who seek Christ, those who are brought by others to Christ, those whom Christ seeks for Himself, those who come without doubts, and those who come with doubts. Each soul must deal with Christ for himself ; the living Lord reveals Himself to the individual heart and conscience by His Spirit and Word (cp. iv. 42). Then each is fitted in turn to become a witness to others.

38. *What seek ye ?* His question encouraged them. "He opened their mouth because He wished to fill it" (Lampe). When men are following even afar off after Him, Christ knows. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know." *Rabbi*, a title of respect, iii. 2, ix. 2, xi. 8, as to a properly qualified teacher from the schools. *Being interpreted*: John writes for a Greek public ; cp. vers. 41, 42, iii. 2. The simple word for Master or Teacher is "Rab." But there were three degrees of distinction : Rab, Rabbi, Rabban (xx. 16) ; cp. Matt. xxiii. 8. The title dates from the times of Herod the Great, and had its rise in the schools of Shimei and Hillel. The modern words, Monsignore, Monsieur, Mynheer, are analogous in use to Rabban. Rab = great ; cp. Lat. *Magister*. *Where are you staying ?* A question put to one away from home. They could not tell what they sought by the way-side, but they suggest that they would like to visit Him at His lodging. Jesus invites them at once. His heart is open to all inquirers.

39. *Come and see*, ver. 46, iv. 29, xi. 34. "A frequent phrase with the Rabbins" (Lampe). The knowledge of God is solely by personal experience (cp. Ps. xxxiv. 8). Jesus lodged probably in some temporary hut, erected for the convenience of those who had thronged to John's baptism. (See Farrar's *Life of Christ*, i. 145.)

The tenth hour. Birth hour of the Church. Five in the afternoon by Jewish reckoning (as in iv. 6 and 52), which divided the day from sunrise to sunset into twelve equal parts. Such also was the Babylonian method, and adopted by the Greeks of Asia Minor. The Roman civil day was from midnight to midnight, but the Eastern mode was usually followed (Lücke). The

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him,
 41 was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own
 brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the
 42 Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he
 brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said,
 Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas,
 which is, by interpretation, A stone.

tenor of the conversation, and what it led up to on their part, are sufficiently indicated by Andrew's joyful exclamation to his brother, ver. 41.

40. Andrew and Simon are referred to as well known. They were sons of Jonah (or John), and fishermen on the Lake of Galilee, in partnership with James and John. *Andrew* = manly, a Greek name. He is put uniformly fourth in the list of disciples. *Simon Peter's brother*, as being of less account and less known. Tradition records a mission to Scythia (hence the patron saint of Russia), and martyrdom at Patræ. (Sermon by Newman; also a suggestive article in *Expositor*, vol. vii. [1878]; Keble's Hymn on St. Andrew's Day.)

41. Both disciples went to find Simon or another; and *Andrew first found his own brother*. Simon and John were close friends. It may be implied that John found his brother James. *Messiah*, or in Greek = the Christ = the Anointed, used here only and iv. 25 in the New Testament, and with the Greek equivalent in both places. The word was applied originally to the king or priest anointed with the holy oil of consecration, the symbol of the Spirit of God, and gradually came to be exclusively applied to the promised king who should deliver Israel from all enemies and sorrow, and reign in righteousness and peace for ever. Cp. these passages where the reference is to the mere earthly king, 1 Sam. xii. 3; 2 Sam. xxii. 51; Ps. xx. 6, lxxxiv. 9, cxxxii. 10; and those where the references, though primarily applicable to an earthly, rises to a heavenly object, 1 Sam. ii. 10; 1's. ii. 2; and cp. Dan. ix. 25 f.

42. Jesus looked on him earnestly, reading him through and through. *Son of John*, always so in Greek (except Matt. xvi. 17) and in Vulgate. *Kephas* = Ch:ld. for rock or stone = *Petros* in Greek; so 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 22, etc. The root of his character was firmness, which, however, needed to be chastened before Simon could be the man of rock. He did not always show this firmness, but it was in him to be the thing, and Jesus holds up to him his ideal, that he may ever aspire to it and believe in himself because Christ believed in him. Of this new name Jesus made use when receiving those confessions, vi. 68 f., Matt. xvi. 16 ff., which were a fulfilment of this prophecy, cp. Acts ii. *Thou shalt be called*, because thou shalt be the thing. Great importance was attached to names among the Hebrews; cp. Gen. xvii. 5, 15, xxxii. 28, xli. 45; Num. xiii. 16; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4; Dan. i. 7. The new name was the emblem of the future life taken into abiding relation with God (see Isa. lxii. 2 and ch. x. 3). To give a new name meant therefore a complete knowledge of the man: power to give the character and relation which the name represented, and adoption into personal service. Name and nature must correspond at last, Rev. iii. 12. Hence names in the O. T. dispensation had an important part in expressing and confirming faith, reminding of promises, and forming a ground of continual hope.

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and
 44 findesth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip
 45 was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip
 findesth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him
 of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus
 46 of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto
 him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip
 47 saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming
 to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom
 48 is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest
 thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that

43 f. Call of Philip : a peremptory command. *Philip*, a Greek name = lover of horses. The fifth place in the apostolic list is always given to him, next to Andrew. Nothing definite is known of what became of him. Tradition mentions Phrygia as the seat of his labours. *Findesth*, with purpose. The call to follow implied the right to demand personal attachment and obedience for whatever purpose : also a wavering disposition that needed peremptory handling. Five disciples belonged thus to the town of Bethsaida (on the western shore of the lake). There was another Bethsaida Julias on the eastern shore probably, though this is disputed by Thomson, *Land and Book*). Mark the wisdom of Jesus in selecting for the chief of His followers those who were early friends, knew each other well, and had confidence in one another. He often builds the best spiritual on the natural.

45 f. *Nathanael* = gift of God : Nethaneel in Old Testament ; considered on good grounds the same person as Bartholomew = Bar-Tolmai = son of Tolmai. His place is always next to Philip in the lists of apostles. *Findesth*, probably also by the Jordan. Nathanael belonged to Cana in Galilee, to which place Jesus was now going, see xxi. 2. *Moses in the law*, Deut. xviii. 15 ff. *The prophets* :—not individual passages are to be thought of, but the whole drift of the revelation. Christ Himself showed how, and the apostles followed His example ; cp. Ps. xl. 7 ; Luke iv. 21, xxiv. 27 ; ch. v. 46 ; 1 Pet. i. 10 f. ; Rev. xix. 10 ; Acts ix. 22, x. 43, xiii. 27, xxviii. 23. *Son of Joseph*. They did not then know the history of the infancy. Does this import any previous acquaintance? Scarcely, when we look at Nathanael's question of surprise, ver. 48. Lampe thinks that "Jesus of Nazareth" was already known. Calvin remarks on the two blunders Philip made, yet he says such are atoned by his desire to lead to Christ. Cana was not far from Nazareth, lying to the north-west. Nathanael could not connect Nazareth with anything very great. A common mistake. It is oftenest from obscure villages and country districts that men of mark come.

47 f. *Truly an Israelite*, etc. : not merely in birth or name ; one in whom the name Israel finds its true application ; there is no *Jacob* element in him : a true son of Abraham, Ps. xxxii. 2. Calvin remarks that this is a definition of Christianity. "Integrity of heart before God and rectitude towards men make a Christian." The name was a source of pride, Rom. ix. 4, xi. 1 ; 2 Cor. xi. 22. In Acts : "Men of Israel." Other failings he might have—not guile. *The fig tree* ; cp. Micah iv. 4 ; Zech. iii. 10. Fig trees were frequently by the wayside. Schaff suggests that this fig tree

Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I
 49 saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi,
 thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.
 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee,
 I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see
 51 greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily,
 verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open,

may have been at the traditional site of Peniel. Nathanael perceived probably that Jesus had read his thoughts when under the fig tree; was therefore conscious of him even though not seeing him with the bodily eye.

49. Nathanael, disarmed by Christ's courtesy, is convinced by His supernatural knowledge that He is the Messiah. *Rabbi*: already reverential. *Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King of Israel*. The scope of this Gospel is to prove that Jesus is all that is implied in these two titles, xx. 31, therefore the prehistoric "Only-begotten of the Father" and the historic "Christ." That on the lips of a Jew in our Lord's day the Messiah was meant by both titles is certain; but that both are therefore equivalent is improbable; see on vv. 14, 18, 34. We must distinguish, however, between what Nathanael understood by such a designation as "Son of God," and what afterwards was known to be involved of the Son's pre-existence and necessary relation to the Father.

50 f. Jesus assures Nathanael that his faith will have a stronger ground: he will see Him yet as the only means of communion between heaven and earth: Christ's first statement of His mediatorial work. *Verily, verily* (Heb. = *sure*), double expression used only by John, and twenty-five times, arresting attention, pledging God's truthfulness; "Jesus spoke in the Father's name and His own" (Bengel); and no doubt a common expression of Jesus, and probably at date of writing (90 A.D.) passed into liturgic use in the Church; 2 Cor. i. 20; Rev. iii. 14; see Ps. xli. 13, lxxii. 19, lxxxix. 52. *Hereafter* omit. *Thou shalt see*. Nathanael was an apostolic witness of the whole revelation of the Father in Jesus: crowned by the resurrection and the subsequent proofs of Christ's exaltation, with the light thrown back on His life on earth, Rom. i. 4; Rev. i. 5. This is the proof which convinces men now; see xx. 29. *I say unto you*: the conscious utterance of Him who is the Truth; see Matt. v. 22, etc., and contrast the "Thus saith the Lord" of the Old Testament: *Heaven opened*, Rev. iv. 1, xix. 11; the metaphor of Divine revelation: hindrances removed between man and God: of free communications: of help and grace; Isa. lxiv. 1; Heb. iv. 16, x. 20. *Angels of God*, etc., recalling Jacob's dream, Gen. xxviii. 10 ff., on which Nathanael may have been meditating, and showing how the fact therein set forth of an unbroken communication between heaven and earth, God and man, should be really achieved through Christ Himself, xiv. 6. "Angels of God," Heb. i. 14. Their personality is not touched on here necessarily, but it is implied. Ascending first, as in Gen. xxviii. The Son of man is here on earth, has come down from heaven, and angels start upwards from Him. Their inferiority to Him is obvious, Heb. i. Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man; through Him alone we have knowledge of God's will and love, access to the Father, assurance that our prayers reach heaven, and that answers return thence.

and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

All our aspirations rise through His mediation, and all our supplies of grace and strength flow through the same ; cp. Heb. iv. 15 f. *Son of man* : the name by which Christ most often calls Himself in the synoptic Gospels ; not so often in this. The use of it is almost exclusively confined to Himself. The question whether it was used by the Jews of our Lord's day to denote the Messiah depends on critical conclusions as to the apocryphal Book of Enoch. Their question (ch. xii. 34) would seem to imply a certain dubiety at least. It occurs in Dan. vii. 13 (though for "one like the Son of man" read one like *a* Son of man, as in Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14), to which passage the Lord apparently refers, Matt. xxiv. 30, xxv. 31, xxvi. 64 ; probably ch. v. 27. The Messiah was known among the Jews as "the man of the clouds." But even if this be regarded as the occasion of its use, and even if it were in vogue among the Jews, we cannot suppose that from Christ's lips it had the same limited significance as among them, and indeed it is difficult to know what precise meaning they would give it as applied to the Messiah. Lücke holds that it has "a strong Jewish colouring," which is true only so far as the origin of the word goes, for it is very clear that Jesus here uses it to mean something beyond the limits of Judaism, with an implied contrast to Nathanael's "King of Israel;" not only King of Israel, but King of *men*. His relations to mankind at large already having been suggested in this ch. ver. 29, the term would therefore imply man and something *more* than man. He was more "of a man" than any man ever has been ; His is the ideal manhood : man as intended by God to be, and as redeemed men through Him shall one day be ; the special child promised to the race, "the seed of the woman ;" the second Adam, in Paul's theology, in whom the race is gathered up ; 1 Cor. xv. 47 ; Eph. i. 10. And being so much it meant *more*, as no mere man could be thought of as the medium of such unceasing communion between heaven and earth (see Schaff, and an exhaustive note by Westcott). Jesus preferred to speak of Himself by this name, avoiding calling Himself the Messiah explicitly for obvious reasons ; and the fact is deeply interesting as bearing on the self-consciousness of Jesus as well as on His joy in identifying Himself with those He came to save, Heb. ii. 11 ff. It was as natural for the apostles to avoid the term. When we put together such passages as ch. v. 27, Matt. ix. 6, xiii. 41, xvi. 27, the character of the kingdom of God as set on a human basis appears. Stephen's vision of the Son of man at the right hand of God fitly closed his history of Divine revelation, which was pressing on to that great end (Ullmann's *Sinlessness of Jesus*, p. 192).

On the Call of the individual Men : each an Instance of Christ's Divine Discernment of Character.

I. A nature like John's was most susceptible to the *personal impression of Christ*. He followed of his own desire, and was not brought. And it is this we see through his Gospel. For such men miracles or striking displays of omniscience, such as drew Simon and Nathanael, are less convincing than the words revealing the mind and heart. What attracted other men would have failed with John. That which drew John, other men would not have had the insight to discover (Browning, *Men and Women*, v. 320-21). No

wonder that it is in this Gospel we read so much of Christ's words : their superiority as evidence to believers, of that secret manifestation of the Son and the Father to the loving heart. It was by such that John had been assured that Jesus was his Lord. There are some who cannot speak to Christ or find Him in the way or in the crowd : they need to be alone with Him to hear and adore in the secret worship of the soul. They are slow to express their feelings ; their springs are deep ; asked what they seek, they answer indirectly. When they are brought to Christ there is ever a secret understanding between such and their Lord which others never seem to reach.

2. *Andrew.* Besides the facts that he was one of the two who first followed Christ, and that with joyful alacrity he went to fetch his brother, and tell him the great news, nothing occurs here which would give a hint as to Andrew's character, unless we are to infer a ready, cheery, impressible man, always interested in others ; one to whom his companions naturally turned for help, and one ready to suggest some course to follow. It was he who first found out that a lad in the crowd had some barley loaves and fishes in his wallet (vi. 8 f.) ; and it was to him that Philip turned for counsel when certain Greeks appeared at the feast in Jerusalem, and requested an audience with Christ (xii. 22). Without possessing the parts which made the first three disciples prominent men, there may have been in Andrew a readiness and unselfishness that rendered his services in the apostolic fellowship of much value. The love and zeal that hastened him to bring his brother to know Jesus, the humility with which he accepted his place outside the privileged three, may mark him out as type of those disciples whose gifts are inferior to their grace, and whose happiness is found as they sink thought for themselves in any tender ministry they can confer on others.

3. All is inward with John, all is outward with Simon. He is brought to Christ. He is arrested by Christ's insight into His character. Christ knew what he was, knew also what he was to be—took the making of him into His own hands. Simon was less open and simple than his brother Andrew, who went as John the stronger character led. Not a quiet talk was wanted for him, but a word of power to make him feel he was in strong hands,—hands of One who could fashion him as He willed. Perhaps, also, coming with a touch of self-confidence to judge and try, he finds himself judged and tried. A man a good deal taken up with himself and with his future, yet with true aims, Christ gives him a higher hope than he had dreamt of, only he was to be Christ's man, not his own ; to reach it in Christ's way, not his own. Change of name signified change of character ; a gradual painful growth, involving breaking down of self-will and all old things, as Jacob was changed to Israel. Impetuosity must be chastened. Many are thus ignorant of what they think they know best—themselves. But the hands of Christ are gracious, loving hands—hands of One who breaks down to build up, who reveals sin to save us from it, who shows us how poor we are to make us rich. Christ sees the rock-man in the impulsive Simon ; others may see the failings only, and prophesy disaster ; Christ sees the possibilities, and will take pains to bring them out. In the child of wrath He sees the heir of glory—“By the present the future is guaranteed” (Chrysostom).

4. Jesus goes out of His way to find Philip. Some seek, some are sought. Cp. the parables of the treasure hid in the field, and of the pearl of great price. Nothing is accidental in Christ's kingdom. Some need a peremptory command. Philip was slow, dubious, wavering, timid,—apt to wonder what was right and necessary to do instead of doing something. Cp. chs. vi.,

xii., xiv. Probably, had Jesus not found him, he had been left a prey to torturing doubts. Some always want many proofs, instead of being satisfied with what they have, and acting on that as they best can. Philip was one of those, too, who miss the delicate suggestions of truth, and would go far afield for what lies at their hand. The best way with such is to give their nature a shock of surprise out of itself, not to give time to ask questions or suggest difficulties or delay,—to put plain duty before them. Follow me!—with no alternative. They need to be sharply dealt with to rescue them from the weakness of indecision. For some this is the only way to peace and safety,—to leave questions they never can settle, and do plain practical duty; not waiting for more light, using the light they have; simply to follow, and keep following their Lord, and no more. Remark, also, how Christ will never leave one whose temperament is weak and timid to his own restless thoughts. Authority is good for men like Philip, if they fall into the right hands.

5. It is of some consequence that one of those first called had difficulties, even though these were of the conventional order. Nathanael, simple-minded as he was, was too honest to rest on testimony of others without being satisfied as to the truth. His attachment to Jesus could only spring out of his previous attachment to the good and true. He was a man of high ethical ideals, the merchantman seeking goodly pearls. To him good must be very good; evil was very evil. He lived a retiring life, keeping his ideals from the profaning touch of the common world. To him, therefore, the Christ must be the crown of all perfection. Contact with Nazareth was degrading. The simplicity of a guileless heart, the love it has for the pure and true, may thus at times be a hindrance in the path of Christ's entrance into it. We incline to think there must be guile in every such case. It is not so, however. Not moral obliquity, but tenderness of conscience and susceptibility to what is high, are sometimes the cause. Nathanael worshipped the good and true and beautiful, and could not see how they were reconciled in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Jesus disarmed him of prejudices by His sympathetic, courteous address; proved Himself to be the witness of every thought and feeling and struggle in the breast of man. The freedom of Jesus from any restraint or coldness of manner is striking, knowing all He knew. In Him prejudice begets no prejudice. If a man cannot as yet come up to His standard, He gives credit for the height he can. There is no attempt to argue here or discuss differences. There is no arrest, as in Simon. Nathanael would have shrunk back, as a sensitive nature does. Jesus says: "Here is a man to whom I have not to give a new name,—a man in whom no Jacob element exists." He thus reaches the intellect through the heart. What most men need is sympathy. Nathanael may have been often rallied by his friends—by Philip—on his unworldliness, and Jesus lays hold of just the feature that seemed to unfit him for practical life, and praises it. It is well to recognise what is good in any man,—that even his error is an exaggeration of the truth,—and to draw men over into trust and confidence. Not all who doubt are guileless; but some are guileless in doubt. Doors will open which we think shut, if we bring only the secret touch of love. Then a common understanding was at once established between Nathanael and Jesus. They were the greatest friends on the spot. He found that his secretest thoughts and aspirations were known. We do not know to what incident Christ refers, but He seemed to allude to something which Nathanael would readily understand. At least God only shares our deepest thoughts. Jesus thus draws Nathanael into trust by revealing the secrets of his life. He knows

CHAP. II. 1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee ; and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus 2 was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when 3 they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They

the darkest hours. “The love of Christ anticipated the love of the friend.” Also when men cry for light, He hears. And then when men accept the light He gives, He promises more. It is safe to postpone many difficulties if you feel there is One who has a perfect knowledge of you, and as perfect a sympathy. What we do not see now, we shall see hereafter, if we walk in the light He gives, and believe.

CH. II. This chapter contains an account of two manifestations of Christ's power : the first in private, the second in public ; the first at a humble wedding in a small Galilean village, the second in the courts of the Temple at Jerusalem ; the first before a few provincials, the second before the recognised leaders of Jewish religious life ; the first an act of kindly courtesy, to relieve a family from a temporary embarrassment, the second an act of righteous indignation, vindicating the sacredness of the Temple from the profane indifference of the priests ; the one ennobling common life, the other reforming divine worship. The two disclosures may be taken also as typical of Christ's whole work — combining mercy with judgment ; combining, further, the anticipations of a great change into the abundance of grace, with reverence for all the past by which God had made Himself known.

3. First Manifestation at Cana in private, ii. 1-11.

1-11. The changing of water into wine. 1. *The third day*, i.e. from the finding of Philip and Nathanael, i. 44-52, the sixth from the day when John and Andrew first met Jesus. *Cana of Galilee*, a village that lay nine miles N.W. of Nazareth, now known as Kânâ el Jelil, and entirely deserted ; to be distinguished from Kefr Kenna, halfway between Cana and Nazareth, which long bore the repute of being the real Cana of the narrative (see Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 425 ff.). *The mother of Jesus was there*. John never calls her by name. Three Marys, besides, are spoken of : Mary of Bethany, Mary wife of Cleopas, Mary of Magdala. No allusion to Joseph leads to the inference of his death. The mother was intimate in the house.

2. If Jesus and His disciples went by Nazareth, the invitation would likely find them there ; meant for Jesus personally, it was courteously extended to His new companions (comp., however, the fact of Nathanael belonging to Cana).

3. Marriage festivals might last several days. More guests than they counted on drained their humble provision. Mary had recourse naturally to her Son, proved as a wise and loving counsellor in the ordinary domestic cares of their own home : and if the wine ran short because of the additional guests, she might feel it was her part, and her Son's, to do something to screen the confusion of her friends. Did she hope for some supernatural act ? When we bear in mind (1) that Jesus would not likely leave for the Jordan without some intimation to His mother that the old home life had come to a close, (2) that He had returned with several men who regarded Him with the reverence of a Master, (3) that from them she probably had heard of the Baptist's testimony to Jesus, (4) that she retained and pondered in her heart the unforgettable memories of His birth, which were kept alive by the sight of the graces adorning His daily humble life, we can scarcely escape the

4 have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith 6 unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner

conclusion that her expectations were keen that He was about to fulfil all that had been foretold of Him. Why might He not reveal His powers there? A mother's pride and womanly vanity were combined with a real wish to do her friends a kindness. She said to Jesus, *They have no wine*, hoping He would extricate them from the perplexity, and display something of the gifts and grace which were in Him.

4. Jesus read all her heart, and answered her secret thoughts rather than her words. *Woman*,—respectful, but distant for a son to his mother,—*what have I to do with thee?* The exclamation of the unclean spirits to Jesus, Mark i. 24 (cp. Josh. xxii. 24; Judg. xi. 12; 2 Sam. xvi. 10). Jesus meant her to see that there was a great difference between her thoughts and aims and His own. She could not suggest a course of action when she did not yet understand the principle of His action. It was a rebuke such as she required, to be read in the light of such words as: “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” Luke ii. 49; and “Who is my mother,” etc.? Mark iii. 33. Mary had to learn painfully, as Simeon forewarned her, that she must renounce every earthly claim for the sake of the higher spiritual claim, that simply of a sinner like any other sinner, saved by her Son's grace. The idolatrous worship of Mary by the Roman Catholic Church is condemned by this incident alone. She is warned back from assuming any place of privilege simply *because* she is Christ's mother; see xix. 26. *Mine hour*, etc. An expression peculiar to John, vii. 30, xii. 23 and 27, xiii. 1, xvii. 1, in which passages the reference is to the supreme hour of His sufferings and death. Here (as in vii. 6, “My time is not yet come”) the allusion is more general, the hour of His self-disclosure to the world. It is an essential part of Christ's ideal personality in John that He is quite aware from the beginning of the result of His mission and of His destiny. He has His hour, and He knows when it strikes; and He is not precipitate, as one not sure of himself. When His hour came, He did not draw back from all it brought on Him. And He was ever and only at the Father's call.

5. *The servants*, lit. *deacons*; the Greek word is usually explained as meaning one covered with dust in his haste to serve (uncertain). *Whatsoever*, etc. Mary took the rebuke as it was given. Her Son was passing out beyond her into a region where she could not follow; she was not to be the same to Him as before. But she knew Him too well to suppose that the straits into which the family was brought would be no concern to Him. She had confidence in His sympathy. If He would not do anything to make Himself famous, if He would not act because she asked Him, she knew that He might be depended on, at least, for a deed of kindness. Years' experience of all her Son had been to her in their home at Nazareth speaks out in those words: “*Whatsoever*,” etc. It is a testimony to Jesus, with its own peculiar value, ranking even alongside of the testimony of the Baptist, and of the greater than John at the Jordan. It seems as if all we wanted to know of the quiet years Jesus passed in silence at Nazareth are summed up in the words. A man is known at home, if anywhere.

6. *Six waterpots of stone*, etc. Observe the accuracy of detail. Where

of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. 7 And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And 8 they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the 9 feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but thou hast* 10 *kept the good wine until now.* This beginning of miracles 11

placed is not said; under some cover is obvious. *The purifying of the Jews.* See on i. 19. The water was used for the washing of hands and vessels, as mentioned in Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 3; one of the traditions of the elders, probably resting on the ritual connected with the laver in the Temple Court, and on promises such as Ezek. xxxvi. 25. The word "purifying" is the same as in iii. 25, where it is used in connection with John's baptism; also in Heb. i. 3, "purged our sins." *Firkin* (Vierkin = $\frac{1}{4}$ of a barrel = $7\frac{1}{2}$ gallons.), Greek *metretes*, holding $8\frac{7}{8}$ gallons., rather more than the Jewish measure, a Bath. Each would contain, therefore, about 20 gallons less or more.

7 f. The unostentatious mode of the miracle is to be noted. His mother desired some brilliant display. Cp. in ch. vi. the quiet way in which the loaves were multiplied; and so, generally, the marks of Christ's miracles were unobtrusiveness and an absence of effort. Even in the greatest (ch. xi.) there is no wrestling with God, simply thanksgiving for being heard. The contrast with the more laboured miracles of the Old Testament, and the inference as to the fulness of the Spirit of God in Jesus, are points often adverted to in this commentary. *The governor of the feast* = the man in charge of the arrangements, practically the *head waiter*; whose duty it was to taste the meat and drink.

9. *The water made wine.* At what point the transformation took place is not said. The great works of God in creation and revelation are done in silence. The character of this miracle, like every other, is inexplicable except as resolved into the will and power of the Son of God. He willed the change, and the change took place. Nor can we say what quantity of water was made wine, whether the whole 120 or 130 gallons, or simply the amount drawn off in the decanters for actual use at the table, which would be more in accord with the analogous miracle of ch. vi. A spurious record would have been scrupulously exact about the amount. The evangelist's thought is fixed on the fact that the water was changed into wine, was tasted as wine by the guests. Jesus would not give, at least, in a niggard fashion. There is always a margin about His works.

10. The impartial evidence of the governor—that the wine was of superior quality. A graphic touch. He could not keep from calling the bridegroom and telling him what he thought about the inversion of the proper order. It was an unusual experience to him. Note also how the gifts of Christ are not inferior. He gives as God in this as in higher respects. *Thou hast kept*, etc.

11. The disciples had been informed by the mother, or the servants, of the miracle. *Miracles*, lit. "signs," the word always used by John and

did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory ; and his disciples believed on him.

translated miracle ; looking at it as a revelation of the supernatural, like a sacrament which is the “sign of an invisible grace.” Thus here, *He manifested forth His glory* ; cp. i. 14, “We beheld His glory,” etc. Not, however, to be limited in John’s conception to miracles ; the whole Person and Work of the Son of God was a “sign ;” every word, every work, every feature of character, let the Divine glory shine through, see xx. 30. Another frequent word of John’s for miracles is “works.” (On these two terms, and the other synonyms, “powers,” “wonders,” see Trench on *Miracles*, Introd.) *His glory*, see i. 14. *Believed on Him*. Note the difference between believing *in* or *on* a person, and believing him simply. The former is saving faith when the object is Christ ; the latter is mere credence. See for examples of both phrases, ch. xiv. II, 12—“Believe me that I am in the Father,” and “He that believeth *on* me, the works that I do shall he do also,” etc. The disciples believed already to a certain extent, but their continuous fellowship with their Lord meant a continuous deepening of their faith in Him.

Remarks on the first of Christ’s miracles.—The prediction of Jesus to Nathanael (i. 51) here receives its first fulfilment. Something of the significance of the name “Son of man” was made clear. Heaven opened itself in grace and kindness and sympathy towards men ; and he who refused to convert stones into bread to gratify Himself, does not refuse to convert water into wine to assist others—a speaking symbol of His whole ministry. The contrast is often noted—Jesus leading His disciples from him who came neither eating nor drinking, to a wedding feast, for which He Himself supplied wine ; and inferences drawn as to the relation of the two dispensations. The Son of man must claim concern in all true human interests. The highest ideal, therefore, may be striven for and reached in common things. The Son of man came eating and drinking, wearing no peculiar dress, affecting no peculiar fashion, adopting nothing that was out of the way, and ready always to go where asked. Christ saves not *from* but *in* life’s common paths—a more difficult and important thing to do. He shares the joy at Cana, the sorrow at Bethany. Heaven and holiness are not here or there. They are where Jesus is, and Jesus walks the ordinary levels of life. Jesus also brings the consecrating touch, which, like His own miracles, transforms earth into heaven, hallows every tie (marriage, family, friendly gathering), if He is “called” to share our interests. Note further our Lord’s thoughtfulness for the smaller perplexities of life. His first miracle came not as on “grand parade,” but in the line of common things. He is “touched with a feeling of our infirmities.” Though this miracle is not in itself explicable any more than other miracles are, yet certain points of fitness are often noticed ; such as the proof that the promised supply for all human need had come down among men, and that the stream of His blessings had begun to flow. Then there is the contrast with the first miracle of the old covenant, when water was changed into blood—“Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Scanty stores are replenished, poverty enriched, the common element becomes the more valuable. The first miracle being thus emblematic of the whole redemptive work of Christ, transforming earth into heaven, want into plenty, etc. ; also proof that the creating Word had come to His own things (“the conscious water saw its Lord and blushed”), and that power to redeem implied the previous power to create. Practical suggestions are obvious, in the line of Christ taking on Himself the bride-

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples ; and they continued there not many days.

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand ; and Jesus went up to
14 Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen, and

groom's responsibilities, and providing when resources fail ; symbol of the poverty of all earth's supplies, of their certain running short at the hour of need, and of Christ placing Himself between us and all want—the true Friend and Provider and Bridegroom of the soul. Again of Christ being the guest, becoming the host ; "I will sup with him, and he with me ;" Christ feeding on our faith, we on His grace. It is also a prophecy of the time when there shall be no more "drought or barren land ;" when we shall drink the wine new with the Lord in His kingdom.

4. *Second Manifestation at Jerusalem in public, ii. 12-25.*

12. *Went down* : Capernaum being on the Lake of Galilee, and Cana lying among the hills. Capernaum was a town of considerable commerce. On the route from Damascus to the Mediterranean, it was the Jewish capital—as Tiberias was the Roman—of Galilee. Latterly it became Christ's "own city," Matt. ix. 1. The ruins of Tell-Hum are generally considered to be the site (Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 352). It does not appear what reason led the family thither. As to the particular time, cp. Matt. iv. 13 ; Luke iv. 23. *Not many days*, because probably of the Passover.

His brothers. The earliest traditions point to real brotherhood in one of two possible ways—these being either sons of Joseph by a former marriage, or sons of Joseph and Mary. The probability is that Jesus had four brothers—James the Just, Joseph, Simon, Judas.

13. *And* : suggests some connection between the short stay at Capernaum and the going up to the Passover. *Went up to Jerusalem.* A phrase taken from the physical and moral elevation of the capital, Ps. cxxii. 4 ; Acts xxi. 12. We speak now of going up to London, as to the headquarters of the Empire.

The Jews' Passover : see on i. 19, cp. ver. 6. Jesus began His ministry at one Passover and ended it at another.

14. *The Temple.* There were three courts—that of the priests surrounding the shrine itself, to the east that of the men, and that of the women. This market was held in the forecourt of the Gentiles, a vast open space enclosed with colonnades, and the most outward circuit of the Temple. No mention is made of such a market in the Old Testament ; and it arose after the dispersion, with the object of accommodating the stranger Jews crowding to Jerusalem from all countries. It would be convenient to have all the materials for sacrifices to hand for the worshippers ; the profanation would be justified on the ground of the sacred purpose ; besides, perhaps, the carelessness of the priests for the sanctity of the mere court of the Gentiles is to be taken into account. Cp. Christ's quotation from Isa. lvi. 7 on the second occasion of His cleansing the Temple, Mark xi. 17. Victims, salt, and meal were sold ; and as the Temple tax (cp. Ex. xxx. 13 ff.), amounting to one half-shekel (1s. 3d.), had to be paid into the treasury in Jewish coin, changers of money were an indispensable adjunct. (Matt. xvii. 24 ff. shows that the tax was collected outside Jerusalem as well. It was payable from March 15

15 sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

to 25.) This market or bazaar may have been at first outside the sacred precincts altogether, but the priests and Levites, who were Sadducees, likely enough were paid a large sum for the permission. The worship in the adjacent courts was disturbed; no proselyte of the gate could perform his devotion quietly, and the scene and the noise must have been intolerable to Christ. The secularities of life are ever intruding into the domain and the service of God—the crowd of self-seeking worldly motives ready to encroach on the very holiest. It is quite possible that even good men had become so used to this scene as to forget that there was any indecency in it. It was a long established custom; no one knew when it had crept in or how, and the thing was so familiar to the eyes of the worshippers as to lose the appearance of irregularity. It was a great convenience to the majority of the worshippers, and changes were troublesome. We can very soon grow tolerant of an abuse which at first sight, or when we see it in the perspective of history, we should condemn. There may be abuses in our Church or worship, as well as in family or individual life, to which we are through custom blind; and it is a great gift of God when one arises whose eye is spiritually open and single. (*The Sale of Indulgences in the Papal Church before the Reformation.*) The spirit of trade drives out the spirit of devotion, and religion itself becomes a tool for worldly and covetous practices. Men would convert their God into gold, and would desecrate the sacred day of rest for gain. When faith in a living and holy God becomes a tradition, this follows: on the one hand, religion made easy; on the other hand, religion made to pay. Our heart is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and all its courts and chambers must be free of the profane traffic of evil. Admit its polluting touch even into the outmost of its precincts, and presently the shrine itself will be unholy.

15. Christ's action was dictated by honest indignation. It was the impulse of a pure, high-minded nature, of a zeal for God, that put self-consciousness, thought of what the authorities would say, considerations of prudence, altogether aside. Rénan sees only an outburst of bad temper. Others try to soften the apparent and real anger. It is wiser to hold that an incapacity for a flash of such holy wrath on such provocation (very far from personal), argues a dull moral feeling. "The abuses of a century require rough dealing." But one needs a pure heart and humble walk with God; cp. Eph. iv. 26 and Num. xxv. 11. A current belief among the Jews, based probably on Mal. iv. 1 ff., held that Messiah should begin His work by such a cleansing of the minutest stain in the Temple. This act, then, was a virtual sign of Jesus' Messiahship, and was so taken by His disciples. The right of a Reformer to set aside previous customs was admitted, as a progressive revelation was believed in so far at least. It is scarcely necessary to bring in a miracle to account for the non-resistance of the buyers and sellers. They were taken by surprise. Their consciences made them cowards. The force used by Jesus was moral chiefly.

16. *My Father's house*: cp. Luke ii. 49. Arguing a special relation-

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and

ship to God, and striking the keynote of His mission. Giving a motive, too, for His action. What true-hearted son will not resent a slight on his father? The boy of twelve, anxious to learn about His Father's business, is at thirty the youth fighting His Father's battles and upholding His Father's honour. Reverence, love, gratitude—all were sinned against. A striking expression, such as the hearers had never heard or read. The word "Father" had in it the seed of a mighty revolution; for the love and reverence of sonship is the spirit of true worship; cp. iv. 21, 23.

17. Note the twofold impression made by every act of Jesus—faith and unbelief. *His disciples—the Jews.* We stand here at the parting of the two ways. The action, perhaps the words of Jesus, recalled to the disciples Ps. lxxix. 9, "The zeal of Thine house shall eat me up" (R.V.). *Remembered* at the time; but not, possibly, until after the resurrection did they fully perceive the Messianic character of the psalm, which is often quoted in the New Testament; ch. xv. 25, xix. 28-30; Rom. xv. 3, xi. 9; Acts i. 20. *Shall eat me up.* Not the results of His work in His death, but the work itself in His zeal for God—an inner consumption of soul, shown in brave testimony, despising fear and shame, in open protest at scandal.

18. *Answered.* The act suggested and evoked a response; cp. Matt. xi. 25, ch. v. 17; cp. Job iii. 2. *What sign?* etc. A consciousness of wrong on their part—hence of moral weakness—lies in their question. They ask Him to give a proof of His right to do what He had done, referring the right to the Messiah. This became their common request (ch. vi. 30; Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1), and meant some sort of outward portent—"a sign from heaven." What higher proof or sign of a Divine mission could be than an act of righteousness like this? The Jews hence disclose their nascent opposition to the light, instead of acknowledging their sin in tolerating abuses, and asking Jesus to help them to correct them, and commanding Him generously for His zeal and courage. They at once took up an attitude of resistance. Sin pointed out to us often determines character by our mode of reception of the rebuke. They needed no sign, in fact, for it was only a right thing that Jesus did; and He might have said so, might have retorted, Why did you never do the same as the guardians of the holiness of this Temple? But He referred at once to the thought of the Messiah which was in their minds. Note that they passed now unchallenged Jesus' claim to have God as His Father, which was brought against Him later on, v. 18.

19 ff. *Destroy this temple*, etc. An enigmatical answer, which they deserved. It did not need a Messiah to sweep away an indecency like that. What sign, therefore, higher than His reverence for God's house could Jesus give? These priests were shutting their eyes to the light shining from the act of Jesus, and asking Him for proof that light was shining. Not because they were anxious to know if He were the Messiah, but because they were angry at Him for exposing them to shame, did they ask a sign. And the Lord answers them intentionally in an enigma, as He spoke afterwards in parables to sift the multitude (Matt. xiii.). He could give no sign which they would

20 in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.
 21 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

not cavil at. To the froward He shows Himself froward. If we ask proof that light shines when we look on it, we must be blind, or false to the light we see. The dark words which Jesus uttered, John tells us His disciples understood, after His resurrection, to refer to that great act of God's power. Jesus could never give a sign of His truth that lay beyond Himself. The true light shone in Him, and shines still. Hence to repeated requests for a sign from heaven, His answer was, as now, the sign of the prophet Jonah—His own resurrection from the dead. John gives prominence to this fact when he records how Jesus refuses any witness but that of His Father, speaking through His own words and works. The climax of the whole was the mighty work of the resurrection, "declared to be the Son of God with power," etc., Rom. i. 4. It is significant that, in His first public appearance, He points forward to the close in death and resurrection as the one great abiding proof of His Divine mission. The resurrection teaches that the true temple of God is the glorified body of Christ, as dwelt in by the fulness of the Holy Ghost; and in spiritual union with Him, all believers are also living temples. By Christ's death the old house, which had been the emblem of Christ's mystical body, with its temporary glory passed away. The rejection of Jesus led to the destruction of that old material Temple, with its local outward worship; and the construction of the "spiritual eternal house," not made with hands, and the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. "The resurrection is the transfiguration of worship because of life." Note how the resurrection is held up ever as the one sign to the world of the truth of Jesus' Divine mission. On this great fact the character of Christ reposes; cp. Matt. xii. 39 f., xvi. 4. How the saying was treasured up and used against Jesus another day, cp. Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58.

20. *Forty-six years.* Herod the Great began to rebuild and enlarge the Temple of Zerubbabel in the eighteenth year of his reign, B.C. 20; and it was completed by Herod Agrippa II. in A.D. 64, according to Josephus. The Jews refer to the state in which it then was. Our Lord used, ver. 19, the word strictly meaning the innermost shrine of the Temple (*ναός*), not the general word for Temple used in vers. 14, 15; and the Jews employ it also.

22. A little touch of inner biography, an indirect proof of genuine narrative. The resurrection shed light on the Old Testament, and both the risen Jesus and the Spirit helped the understanding; cp. Luke xxiv. 45. *Believed the scripture*; an expression occurring ten times in this Gospel. Which scripture? Cp. Ps. xvi. See ch. xx. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 4; Acts ii. 24, xiii. 35. John treasured up Christ's words similarly, vii. 39, xii. 33, xxi. 19.

On the section 13-22, note the way in which Jesus reconciled the new with the old. We might not have been surprised had Jesus disregarded this desecration on the ground of the speedy abolition of the Temple and its services. He might have said: "What matters it? A few years and the

veil shall be rent. Why cleanse a dying system? Let them alone,—a worthier Priest, an eternal Temple are at hand." Still it was a Divine institution for the time. To show disregard for that would be to disregard God's honour, and to be incapable of preparing some better thing for the future. Reverence for the past makes the true reformer. Jesus does not say, "Let sacrifices cease. I am come!" but points out the immoral trafficking in holy things. Not by leaping down from the pinnacle of the Temple, a bid for power, but by entering the courts as a humble God-fearing worshipper, an appeal to conscience, Christ comes. Sometimes to correct a plain abuse is the best if humblest way of preparing the way of the Lord in the Church or in one's own life.

The other evangelists record a cleansing of the Temple courts by Jesus on the occasion of His last visit to Jerusalem,—at the Passover, when He was offered up. Were there really two such acts, or only one? And if only one, is it misplaced in John or in the Synoptists? Lücke takes this second alternative, and regards the proper order this of John—Christ appearing here for the first time in true character as a Reformer. If there were two cleansings, John's omission of the second, and the Synoptists' omission of the first, are equally difficult to account for, though parallel with several other features of these records. It is reasonable to think that, making every allowance for discrepancies and the like, no evangelist had so far confused the traditions of the Lord's ministry as to put an event which opened or which closed that ministry in a reverse order. John himself was an eye-witness of this act at least. The probabilities, on internal grounds, for two acts are these: it would not be strange if Jesus completed the circle of appeal, ending just where He began; recalling in a solemn way the event that had taken place there three years before; setting all before them once again—in the last offer of Himself. If the first act had not led to the cessation of the abuse,—as, with the priests conniving, was not likely,—there was as much reason for Jesus to repeat the cleansing when again in contact with the irreverence. Then the different words uttered on the two occasions seem to suit the beginning and close of His work respectively; for in John His protest is simply against the dishonour done *His Father's house* by the profanity; while in the other three the protest is as it were on behalf of the nations without, whose court was allowed to be abused as if in contempt of any Gentile claim: the universality of the worship of the Father being asserted; while the shade of condemnation is deeper,—there is a note of defiance,—there is not even an order addressed to them, or a prohibition. The end is come. Note also how Matthew and Mark preserve the remarkable answer of Jesus, given in John, to the request for a sign, Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58. Cp. the two miraculous draughts of fishes,—also at the beginning and close respectively of the ministry. In the personal dealings of the Spirit of God there is something of the same,—the end goes round to meet the beginning. As often a word awakens a whole train of old associations,—we are suddenly conscious that we once before were in precisely the same sort of conditions,—so there are distinct turnings back on former experiences, from which fresh starts are made, for those who are suffering the Spirit to lead them; also for those who reject this lead, to whom God's mercy appeals in ways once fresh and arousing and tender, which still have some power—but a decreasing power—to melt the will; until a last appeal comes, and men read in its features the resemblance of long-forgotten offered grace, when heaven was very near and very real, and feel that the hour of final decision is arrived

23 Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the 24 miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself 25 unto them, because he knew all *men*, and needed not that any should testify of man : for he knew what was in man.

CHAP. III. 1. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nico-

23-25. The faith that rested on the miracles which Christ did was not a faith which He valued. Cp. this Gospel all through, iv. 48, vi. 26, xiv. 11. John's words imply the recalling of an incident that surprised his disciples at the time. Jesus never refused any one absolutely, though He warned all what committal to His service meant. By not trusting Himself to them, John meant, perhaps, an apparent indifference and reserve on the part of His Master to men who seemed enthusiastic. John wondered then ; knew by and by the reason. Many of these so-called believers were probably among the Galileans who offered to make Jesus their king (ch. vi.), and left Him on refusal. And the nature and extent of their faith may be judged by that fact. He was a political Messiah. For the phrase, *believed on His name*, see i. 12. Jesus did nothing from the first to encourage their schemes. Notice the usual reserve of Jesus : He is calm, sure of His ground ; with high aims, not flattered by any admirers, not eager to form a party. (See this Gospel throughout.) His knowledge of human character is frequently referred to (chs. iv.-vii.) ; it is consistent only with a nature more than human, Jer. xvii. 10. From the beginning of His ministry Jesus is represented by John as in full consciousness of His work and of the way of effecting it. He did not need to be put on His guard, or to be advised, or to take advice. Opposition did not move Him from His path ; nor the enthusiastic admiration of the crowd. He was not afraid, and He was not flattered. He was dealing with men whose motives He read with the eye of their Creator. This does not exclude his own human experiences or His power of universal sympathy.

5. *Christ and Three different Types of Character.* a. *The Pharisee and Member of Sanhedrim*, iii. 1-21. b. *The Samaritan Woman*, iv. 1-42. c. *The Herodian Courtier*, iv. 43-54. *With the Interlude of the Baptist's Final Testimony*, iii. 22-end.

CH. III. 1st, Christ's conversation with Nicodemus, 1-21. 2nd, From town to country, 22-24. 3rd, Dispute between John the Baptist's disciples and a Jew, and John's closing testimony to Christ, 25-end. The evangelist records eleven interviews between Jesus and other persons.

(i.) The discourse falls into two divisions, which treat (a) of the kingdom, 1-11 ; and (b) of the king, 12-21. Ver. 1. Although Jesus did not commit Himself to the "many," He did commit Himself to this honoured ruler of the Jews, who came to confide in Him the deep impression which His works had made on him. Nicodemus was not a man of great strength of character, but he was candid, inquiring, and desirous of dealing honestly with facts ; see ch. viii. 1. He was not held by the prejudices of his own class, though afraid to brave their judgment by being seen to have friendly intercourse with Jesus. A member of the Sanhedrim (vii. 45 ff.), a Pharisee and a scribe (ver. 10), he was yet modest and ready to accept truth from "the Galilean." The name (Greek) was common among the Jews. The evangelist would likely be present at the interview.

2 demus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles
 3 that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

2. *Rabbi*, respectful. *We know*. He speaks either the conviction of a few like-minded with himself, e.g. Joseph of Arimathea, xii. 42, or the conviction of all, though all would not admit it. Nicodemus might see through their prejudices. Ch. ii. 23 rules the thought of this passage. Nicodemus takes the miracles of Jesus as signs of a Divine mission at least. *Hast come from God a teacher*. The word "teacher" qualifies the previous "come from God." Like one of the old prophets, the words do not have the significance that on Jesus' lips by and by they came to have. Both the quality of the miracles and the wonder in them witnessed to the special presence of God with the doer of them. Moses had long before warned the Hebrews against accepting any superhuman act as accrediting error (Deut. xiii.). The miracle and the truth which it is meant to display or confirm cannot be so separated as to constitute the former an invariable proof of the latter. Christ's miracles and teaching and character form an organic whole. And no doubt it was the combined impression of these which led an open-minded man like Nicodemus to make this confession of faith in the supernatural mission of Jesus. This gives one reason at least for Christ's answer, which at first seems abrupt.

3. *Verily, verily*, cp. i. 51. Jesus spoke to the thoughts rather than to the words of Nicodemus, who probably, like the rest of his class for whom he spoke, was anxious to know in what relation Jesus claimed to stand to the kingdom of God, which he expected through the coming Messiah. The whole demeanour of Jesus had the appearance of suggesting something more than that He was a divinely-accredited teacher merely. What was the more? What was His place in the kingdom? "We *know* this, but we desire to know more." Jesus suggests in reply two other questions of greater consequence: What really is the kingdom of God? and who are the true subjects of it who have a right to enter? *Except a man*, etc. *Born again* (*anew*, R.V. or *from above*). See on i. 13. The former probably is the correct signification (though in ver. 31 and ch. xix. 11 and 23 the same word must be rendered "from above"), judging by Nicodemus' immediate question. But the new nature is a Divine nature. (See also Titus iii. 5; 1 Pet. i. 3, 23.) Jesus lays emphasis on the need of a second birth for every man, Jew and Gentile alike, who would see the kingdom of God. No earthly privileges would make for a man, and no earthly disadvantages make against him. Not because he was born a Jew should one enter, not because born a Gentile should one be shut out. Every man must, and any man might, be completely made a new man—made over again—to be fit to share the kingdom, and God alone could do that. See 2 Cor. v. 17. The consequence of the second birth is therefore Divine sonship, the partaking of the very life of God. This is one of John's greatest and most frequent thoughts, expressed usually so, to be "born of God;" as see already i. 13, and his Epistles. *The kingdom of God*. The only instance (cp. xviii. 36) in John of the use of this familiar phrase, so often met with in the Synoptists

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his

either so or “the kingdom of heaven.” They are the words, too, with which both the Baptist and Jesus began their respective ministries—“Repent, for the kingdom,” etc. Men anxiously looked for the king; but that they needed to question what the kingdom meant, did not occur to them. It was taken for granted that the kingdom of God or heaven meant the Jewish people ruled by Messiah, exalted to the supremacy of the world. Every born Jew had, *ipso facto*, a passport into this kingdom. The gate for Gentiles was conversion to Judaism. The Baptist first and Jesus afterwards laid the axe at the root of this self-complacent view. To preach repentance signified that men were not ready or fit to enter the kingdom. Their King might come and reject them for His subjects. Jesus therefore here explains what the kingdom is by defining who alone are entitled to enter it. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of *sons of God*, a spiritual kingdom of filial love, of desire after God, of obedience to His will, of men who share God’s own nature. It is the reality of which the O. T. theocracy was the semblance (Ex. xix. 6). Wherever God’s life is in a heart, God’s kingdom has come. It is a spiritual constitution of mankind. One regenerate man is the radical type of the kingdom. However far and wide its influence must extend, it is always back to this fundamental position we must come; the spring of power is the life of God in the individual soul. That John never again uses this expression is accounted for by the fact that he wrote long after the destruction of Jerusalem had crushed hopes of a restoration of power to the Jews through a Messiah; after the earlier Christian conceptions of an immediate return of their Lord to Jerusalem had passed into wider and juster thoughts about the kingdom. The expression, as liable to the old limited construction, fell into disuse. Life—present and eternal communion with God for every believer in Jesus Christ—is John’s substitute for it. Even in the earlier Gospels we meet such words as these, “The kingdom cometh not with observation;” “The kingdom is within you;” “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus from the beginning, as we see here, strove to lead men up to higher and more spiritual conceptions of it with partial success. The seed bears fruit at last in John. Note the spiritual nature of the kingdom, the growth of it only by the inclusion of individual men, and the necessary Divine renewal of their nature in order to that inclusion. Cp. the Sermon on the Mount with this discourse to Nicodemus. Our Lord lays down in this passage the one fundamental principle which carries with it all that is elaborated in the former, and explains it. For all the required conditions and qualifications meet in this form, “born of God.” See Luke xvii. 21, “The kingdom of God is within you.” (For further remarks on the kingdom of God, see ch. xviii. 36.) *Cannot see*—“with fruit” (Bengel).

4. *Nicodemus saith—born.* Nicodemus and Jesus were moving in different circles of thought. The question of the former was not captious, though he could hardly help thinking of the term applied to proselytes by Rabbis, “new-born babes,” as well as, perhaps, of the promise of a new and clean heart in the prophets. He may have felt that Jesus was pointing His utterance at himself, and he partly deprecated the suggestion that he might be shut out, and yet was partly in earnest, because finding Christ’s word

5 mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily,
 I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the
 6 Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which
 is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the

a searcher of his own spirit. Christ's words are meant to rouse men out of their spiritual security, and to strip from them every illusion behind which conscience can shelter. Nicodemus came to question Jesus about His claims, and he unexpectedly finds himself questioning his own soul as to the worth of his own hopes instead. How can an old man alter the character which years have formed? "*How and why ever oppose faith?*" (Bengel).

5. *Jesus—God.* Jesus meets the difficulty of Nicodemus: enforcing again the *need* of the new birth, he explains its *nature* and *method*. It is a birth of *water and the Spirit*. Why this combination of the outward and inward? Ezekiel (xxxvi. 25 ff.) promised that God should sprinkle clean water on His people, and put His Spirit within them. Cleansing them from the pollution of past sin, and imparting a new Divine principle of life to provide for future holiness. These two blessings are the negative and positive aspects of the salvation of God respectively, to which repentance and faith on our part correspond. Both were symbolized in the baptism of John (though from its more negative and preparatory character called "*the baptism of repentance*"). The reality it was not in His power to bestow (see notes on i. 24 ff.). It is not therefore to the sacrament of baptism Jesus refers, but to the truths which underlie the sacrament, and to the blessings of which it is a sign and seal, the new birth including the putting away of the old unclean nature and the putting on of the new, through the application of Christ's atoning sacrifice by the Spirit, and its appropriation in faith, and the Spirit's indwelling henceforth in the soul. It is Paul's experience (Gal. ii. 20), "I live no more, but Christ liveth in me." Cp. Ps. li. 7 ff.; Ezek. xxxvi. 25 ff.; Zech. xiii. 1; Titus iii. 5. In Christ's baptism by John there was a concurrence of water and the Spirit, though there was no possibility of repentance, because no old nature to put off, and no ethical need of the Spirit, because the human nature was the work of the Spirit altogether. (It will be borne in mind that a link of communication in Nicodemus' mind with this truth would be the familiar practice of baptizing proselytes on their admission to the Jewish faith.) Entrance into the kingdom of God is therefore limited to those who have undergone that Divine renewal of nature, in consequence of which sin is taken away and the Spirit of God becomes their life. As the nature of the kingdom is determined by the subjects of it, so to "*see*," to "*enter*" the kingdom, are necessarily spiritual acts.

6. *That which is born, etc.* This new birth is indispensable for every seeker of the kingdom, because the natural life of all men is alien from the life of God, and cannot by any power of its own unfold into it. *Flesh* (cp. note on i. 14), to be taken in John's common signification—human nature simply *as such*, and apart from supernatural aid. "*Flesh*" scarcely has even here the Pauline meaning—the principle of evil in opposition to the grace of God working in man, though the ethical is suggested. There is a natural birth and there is a spiritual birth. The spiritual can never rise out of the natural, as no stream can rise higher than its source. "*Adam begat a son in his image and likeness.*" "*Of His own will begat He us with the*

7 Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must
8 be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou
hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh,
and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

word of truth—that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” *Of the Spirit*—the Holy Spirit—*is spirit*—i.e. shares the life of the Holy Spirit. The natural life of man, though derived from God, is not the life of God, which can only be quickened in us by the Holy Spirit. This great change is therefore not merely the improvement of any power or grace or gift which we naturally have: not merely amendment of life, not merely abandoning a sin. Flesh may be washed and adorned; but it is flesh still, and no matter whether flesh of Jew or Gentile. The whole man must be transformed: mind, heart, and will. And the Agent of transformation is the Spirit of God Himself acting directly and immediately on the spirit of man. *Born of the Spirit*. Hence such expressions: “a new creature;” “the new man;” “the spiritual man;” see 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; Eph. iv. 23; 1 Pet. i. 23. Nothing, in fact, more striking can be said of it than Jesus here says: a new birth—a passing from one state of existence to another: from non-existence to existence, Hos. ii. 23; from the law of sin and death to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The new life may be feeble at first, growing very gradually; still it is new life, and will come to perfection in its time. It is not on a perfect state Jesus lays stress: it is on the kind of state the man is in; on the character of the life that is there, and not the vigour of it. As matter of fact, in the regenerate there is always more or less of the power of the flesh; just as in the unregenerate there are often movements and strivings of the Spirit.

7. *Marvel—again.* Nicodemus looked or expressed surprise at the warning that he will not simply as a Jew, and a respected one, enter the kingdom. Much of the teaching of Christ causes surprise even in those who seem to know the truths of the Gospel well; especially when the necessity for an entire spiritual renewal is urged.

The necessity arises from the foregoing pronoun. Mark the pronoun *ye*, not *we*. Jesus knew His own position.

8. *The wind:* same word in Greek as that for the Spirit; so that the alternative reading of the R.V. *margin*, “The Spirit breathes,” etc., is legitimate; it does not, however, yield so good a sense. In the one case, the parallel is drawn between the mysterious coming and going of the wind, and the operations in the human heart of the Spirit of God. In the other case, the parallel is simply between one kind of the Spirit’s operations and another. This remark of Christ seems intended to meet difficulties about the fact or possibility of such a power which might occur to Nicodemus. It is not comprehensible, e.g. the Spirit is not seen; and no more is the wind. The phenomena of natural life do not tell us, and cannot tell us, what the spring of it is; and as all creation is an effect, we must believe in invisible powers, also judging from effects. We *can* tell the whence and whither of the Spirit in a sense (cp. ch. viii. 14), but cannot determine how or where or when He will work—cannot see Himself at His work. Note, so is *every one*, etc., and not “so is the *action of the Spirit*.” Only in the regenerate soul do we “hear the sound thereof:” to appearance there is the same man. Yet he is not the same: he is changed in aim and motive and bent, the spiritual

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these
 10 things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a
 11 master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily,
 verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and
 testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.
 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how
 13 shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no
 man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down
 from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

man draws the inspiration of his daily life from a source that is not seen. The fruits of the Spirit which are found in him prove this; such as "love, joy, peace," etc., Gal. v. 22. These do not grow on the stem of nature—"the flesh." He walks by faith, not by sight. The main principles of conduct show a paramount regard to the unseen and eternal. (On the use of analogy from nature consecrated by Jesus, see Trench's *Introduction to the Parables*, p. 14.)

9. *Nicodemus—be?* This question goes deeper than he knew. Jesus answers this in the second part of His discourse.

10. *Jesus—things.* *These*, emphatic. *The teacher*: meaning not the only one, but concentrating the qualifications of the class in the individual before him: a noted one, besides. *Knowest not*, etc. The surprise of Jesus was justified by the teaching of the O. T. Scriptures, with which Nicodemus was familiar. All that Jesus had said was a plain inference from the O. T. teaching, only seen from a new point of view, to which Nicodemus had not yet attained.

11 f. *Verily—things.* Jesus passes on to speak of the King—the highest in heaven, the lowest on earth, who came to save, not judge the world; for such is God's love. The new disclosure of the kingdom arose from the new disclosure of the King, *i.e.* of God Himself, in the Person of the Son of man. *Verily*, etc. Solemn attestation of the reality of the great things about to be uttered, the "heavenly things" of ver. 13 ff. The earthly things must be the doctrine of the new birth just explained. "Regeneration is of heaven, not in heaven; it is indeed on the margin of heaven" (Bengel): it rested for Nicodemus on the facts of the O. T. record, on the facts of observation, and on personal experience—namely, that no man could partake of the life of God unless God had communicated that life to him.

Does Jesus allude to His testimony of *earthly* or of *heavenly* things in ver. 11? or generally to the way in which His testimony was received, not by Nicodemus only, but by the Jews? cp. ver. 32. Observe the unusual pronoun from Christ's lips—"we." Bengel, however, is strained, if devout: "He speaks of Himself and the Spirit." His own knowledge and experience of Divine things; not any tradition of the fathers, no hearsay, was the ground of His teaching. It was certain, immediate knowledge; cp. ver. 13, i. 18. In our lower measure it must be ours for any practical use, experience being the root of testimony. But Christ's experience is unique. He knows: we know through Him. If Jesus interposes His own personal authority, it was no more than Nicodemus recognised in acknowledging Him as a teacher "come from God."

13. *And—heaven.* "And yet I must tell you; for if not I, then none

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even
15 so must the Son of man be lifted up ; that whosoever be-
lieveth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

can ;" cp. Matt. xiii. 11 ; also Deut. xxx. 11 ; Prov. xxx. 4 ; ch. i. 18, and Eph. iv. 10 ff. Besides, no man can acquire by his own right or strength this new Divine life or any true knowledge of it, the Son of man has descended to give it. This revelation of God in the Gospel is therefore not the result of human thought or effort. *He that came down from heaven* : assertion of Christ's pre-existence, and His entrance into human nature, although not originally of it. Heaven is the sphere of the spiritual, eternal, ideal. (The clause, "which is in heaven," is of doubtful authority. The meaning would be probably similar to that of the clause in i. 18, "which is in the bosom of the Father," indicating the kind of existence which Christ as the Divine Son has ever had and continues to have.) Jesus claims, therefore, to be alone the Revealer of God ; and the revelation is available for us since He is Son of man. Cp. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he," etc., Matt. xi. 27 ; also ch. xiv. 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," etc. Christ here claims the office of Prophet—He opens heaven.

14. *And—up.* Christ is Redeemer as well as Revealer. For men need not only to be told truth, but also to be saved from spiritual death. Jesus explains the nature and mode of this redemption by the lifting up of the serpent of brass in the wilderness to cure the Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents, Nu. xxi. 8 ff. In the same way—to the same effect—the Son of man must be lifted up, *i.e.* undoubtedly on the cross. The resemblance does not, however, belong only to the outward—it concerns the inner spiritual significance. If we believe that the use of such a symbol in the wilderness was suggested by some more or less obvious relation which it had to the plague under which the people were smarting, and was not an arbitrary selection, we shall feel that Christ's comparison extends to this relation also. The serpent of brass transfixated on the pole meant the taking away of the cause of death by an act of Divine judgment ; it was the image of the thing that wrought their ruin, itself thereby brought to ruin. It said both that God was delivering them, and that He was delivering them *in such a way*. So the Son of man lifted on the cross is at once the representation of man's destruction and sin, and of the Divine judgment on sin by which sin is taken away. The crucifixion of the Son of God was the crowning act of human ungodliness ; it was at the same time the descent of the curse on the Son of man (man's one true representative) on account of sin, and so its complete removal ; cp. 2 Cor. v. 21, "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin," etc., and Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." The cross is the symbol of God's salvation, but of salvation *in such a way*. *Lifted up* (cp. viii. 28, xii. 32) to the cross, thence to the right hand of God, and still always as Son of man, man's representative. To express the same idea of suffering and of glory through suffering, John uses also the term glorify, *e.g.* vii. 39, xiii. 31, xvii. 5. *Must* ; cp. Luke xxiv. 26. In the Divine decree Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ; cp. Rev. v. The necessity of Christ's death is gathered from its relation to the glory, justice, law of God, and to the sin and hopes of mankind. Jesus here claims the office of Priest.

15. *That—life.* Statement, further, of the Divine purpose in the death of Christ. If the Son of man on the cross corresponds to the brazen serpent, men

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but in general correspond to the poisoned Israelites. All men have the poison of sin working in them to death. To look at the brazen serpent brought cure to the body; to look at Christ crucified brings healing to the soul. (Omit the clause "should not perish," R.V.) As the erection of the brazen serpent did not cure any man unless he looked at it, so Christ crucified is the Divine provision for salvation; but men must look to Him individually. Faith in Christ is looking to Him as given by God for our salvation from sin; it is the look expressive of helplessness, of need, of desire, of acceptance, of personal appropriation. A look brought sin into the world; a look takes it away. Doubtless the predominant conception of the Son of man lifted up in the mind of the beholder is that of His relation to sin. Note the width of the Divine purpose. Faith in Christ brings life. This is the evangelist's theme, ch. xx. 31. That this life is a present possession is a thought characteristic of John; and that it is realized in the personal union with Jesus, which is the result of faith, 1 John v. 12, "He that hath the Son hath life" (see note on i. 4). This life is also *eternal*—an expression used twenty-three times by John. Eternal life is simply the life in communion with the Eternal One. That the idea of duration is to be excluded from our understanding of the term is unreasonable, and untrue to the history of its usage; though at the same time for the fulness of meaning we must rise beyond all limits or conditions of human thought. Cp. ch. xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Life in the true ideal sense is fellowship with God through faith in Jesus Christ; and this, the possession of which is matter of actual certainty now to the believer, lasts for ever. (R.V. prefers to read, "may in Him *have* eternal life.") Jesus here claims the office of King. This King gives life to His subjects by giving His own life for theirs. Risen and reigning at God's right hand, Christ dispenses the gifts of His mediation to all who believe in Him.

16. *For—life.* The reason why there exists such a provision for dying men. The origin of such a fact is the love of God. The *extent* of that love is world-wide. The *measure* of it is the gift of His only-begotten Son. *Loved.* No one needs to be told what love is. It is a universal language. All human love flows from this infinite spring—"God is love." This is the ultimate truth of revelation. The love of God to men is the source of their salvation and blessing in the Son. *The world.* See note on i. 9. John's conceptions of Divine redemption and its relation are always catholic. Cp. i. 29; 1 John ii. 2. The *freeness* of that love, as well as its all-embracing character, is suggested in the fact of the world's indifference and enmity to God. No love from the world rising to God drew the love of God down to the world. *That He gave.* Love is giving—giving oneself. Hence God's giving is Himself—the Father giving the Son, and the Son giving Himself. If the only-begotten Son were not equal to the Father, the gift would be less than the measure of Divine love. These two—the love of God and God's gift to men of His only-begotten Son—measure each other. We know the former only in the latter; cp. 1 John iii. 16, iv. 10. *Only-begotten*, see i. 14, 18. *Perish.* The opposite of having eternal life; separation from communion with God, not implying a cessation of existence, but an absence of that which makes existence a thing to be desired—a lost life. Whether retrievable or not must be decided otherwise. The sum of Christ's

17 have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

truth is here gathered into a brilliant focus. There is the *need* of a Divine salvation—a perishing world, unable to help itself. There is the *source* of that salvation—the love of God. There is the *method* of salvation—the gift to men of the only-begotten Son ; and there is the *individual reception* of this gift—faith in Him. Lastly, the *nature* of this Divine salvation—eternal life. We may add that the free universal offer of salvation, the unlimited, unrestricted grace of it, is the most notable feature of the whole passage.

17. *For—saved.* Strange as it may seem, and deserved though it would have been. *God sent not*, etc. Note the frequent conception of the Father as *sender* and the Son as *sent* on this great mission, implying (1) pre-existence on the part of Jesus, another world in which He lived and out of which He came into this world ; (2) a great Divine plan.

To judge [condemni] the world ; the natural suggestion of the human conscience, under sense of guilt, is that the appearance of God on earth means judgment. And this is not a heathen idea only, for see Ps. xcvi., xcvi. If He judges there is but one verdict, Ps. cxxx. 3, hence judgment is condemnation.

That the holy God should appear among sinful men, not to inflict punishment for sin but to save them out of sin, is the mystery hid from eternal ages ; cp. ch. xii.

47. *That the world might be saved through Him.* The Divine purpose of grace is wide as the world. *Saved*, i.e. from sin and the consequences of Divine judgment on sin. This it can only be by receiving the life of God through the Son. Its own life is without God, and therefore without hope. At the same time, the revelation of salvation in Christ is the revelation of judgment as well, xii. 47 f.

18. The proof that God sent His Son into the world not to judge but to save, is found in the experience of the individual. *He that believeth on Him is not judged.* That is a fact of which the believer is conscious through the Holy Spirit. For him the Divine judgment on sin is past, he sees it in the lifting up of the Son of man. His sin is judged there. Accepting, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ as the bearer of the world's sin, he knows that in the sight of God he is not condemned. Christ's judgment is his judgment, Christ's death his death, Christ's risen accepted life his life. The state of penalty for him is abolished. He has confidence toward God ; see ch. v. 24. He has met with God in the cross of Christ, so shall meet Him in the day of final judgment with boldness, I John ii. 17, 28. *Hath been already judged*, etc. ; John's ideal and absolute way of speaking is to be remembered. A process may be going on of which the term, however, is clear. The standard of judgment is the revelation of God in the Son. Unbelief judges itself because it does not rest on the declaration of God's character and will, His love and grace, in the name of the only-begotten Son. The revelation of the Father through the Son ought to carry a man's belief with it. He who does not believe is already judged in the fact that he does not believe. It is a moral attitude he is asked to take up, not an intellectual. *In the name of*

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because
 20 their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should
 21 be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

the only-begotten, etc. A revelation of Divine love offering Divine sonship through the only-begotten Son ought to correspond to the deepest instincts of the heart. The object of faith is personal, and therefore he who is not drawn in trust and self-surrender to Christ as God's exponent of love condemns himself.

19 f. *This is the judgment*, i.e. the way or process by which judgment takes place. *The light*, etc.; see the prologue, also viii. 12. Light is its own proof. If men reject it, they do so not because it is insufficient to guide, but because it reveals what they would rather have hid, and the way they had rather not go; see Rom. i. 21 and 28, and Eph. iv. 18. Christ proves Himself, for He is light to the moral and spiritual nature; see notes on i. 4. *Men loved the darkness rather than the light*. Man's love of darkness is the cause of his unbelief, and the love of darkness comes out in evil deeds. The radical fault lies in perverted affections. No matter how clear and convincing the light may be, when the heart clings to darkness. Men are not even impartial in this matter, or in a state of suspense. They do not welcome a revelation from God which rebukes their evil works, in order to save them from their bondage. They live sinful lives, and therefore hate the truth, which demands purity and gives it. Then the depravity of the heart blinds the mind.

21. *But—God*. The distinction between the different verbs in Greek: "Every one that doeth evil," ver. 20 (R. V. margin, "practiseth"), and, "He that doeth the truth," may be brought out thus: Every one that committeth or perpetrateth evil, and, He that achieveth or accomplisheth the good. The one means doing without result, the other with result, see v. 29; but this is not invariable, see I John iii. 4, 8, [and Demosthenes, I Phil. ch. ii.]. "To do the truth," is a phrase peculiar to John, cp. I John i. 6. It implies that truth does not belong to the understanding alone, but concerns the will. To do the truth one must be himself true; and his actions reveal his character. "To do the truth," "to be of the truth," "to be of God," are all used by John in the sense of dealing sincerely with conscience and the light which we have. If this be so, we are prepared to welcome more light—we are receptive, cp. vii. 17. *Is coming*: often a slow—always a sure—approach. Nicodemus was himself an example in point. To such the attraction of the light is its revelation of God: for to have the character made like His, and to have conscious fellowship with Him, is the highest aspiration of the heart that loves the light. He comes to the light in order that that light may penetrate himself, and so prove him to be in union with God, its source; see I John i. 5 ff.

NOTE ON THE WHOLE PASSAGE, 1-21. The first part of the conversation deals with the *need* for a new life: no man being of himself fit for that fellowship with God which is implied in entering His kingdom, also with the *nature*

of that life as it is implanted by a Divine personal presence in the soul. The second part deals with the way in which it becomes possible for men—unable to rise above “flesh”—to attain this Divine life. None can ascend to heaven to claim it or secure it; but it has come down to men in the Person of the only-begotten Son incarnate, through whose self-surrender to death men by their faith in Him are raised out of their own sinful condemned lives, and share the life of God. The first part says: No man is fit to be in the society of God who has not the character of God; and no man naturally has the character of God, and no man naturally ever can have it. The second part says: That what is impossible for man, and undeserved, God in His unspeakable love to him has done for him, sending His only-begotten Son to earth to give to man by dying for him the fitness for His society in heaven. Further, every man who believes in the Son as thus given by God, is thereby made partaker of this eternal life of God. The first part speaks of the *subjective change* in the individual soul. The second part speaks of the *objective facts* through the influence of which this change is realized. The question is: How can the earthly become heavenly—the natural, spiritual, when the earthly and natural cannot rise to the heavenly and spiritual of itself? And the answer is: The spiritual and heavenly descends in the Person of the Son of God, and interpenetrates the plane of the natural and earthly. He is the Second Man—the Son of man—the Lord from heaven—the quickening Spirit. But the impossibility of intercourse between the two is, above all things, moral. The natural or earthly man is what he is, because he is defiled with sin, because sin is a deadly poison, corrupting him. No descent of the spiritual or supernatural on him could give him Divine life unless it took account of this fact. Hence the Son of man must be lifted up. He shows both the true ideal life of man, and He atones for sin. Then the conviction between the outward fact and the inward experience is obtained by individual faith. The exclusiveness of the first part is met by the inclusiveness of the second: “Except a man,” etc., by “whosoever believeth should have eternal life.” Faith unites the soul to the Son of God, and to Him as “lifted up;” hence conformity to His death, and participation in His sinless life. The question whether a man can believe before being born from above, or be born from above before believing in Christ lifted up, is of no practical moment. Faith is both the act and the result of seeing Christ crucified. It will be useful to compare Matt. v. 3 with ver. 3. John deals with the root of the Christian life and of the Christian principle, while Matthew deals with the fruits. Again the order in which these great truths are presented to Nicodemus is to be noted. After he is led to marvel if he himself shall be worthy of a place in God’s kingdom, Jesus opens to him the secret of God’s grace: how the love of God in the gift of the Son has done for flesh what it could not for itself; that the King has laid His life down in order that His kingdom might be set up; and that no man might feel he was shut out. When we, touched with the sense of our own helplessness, say: How can these things be? how can we, who are flesh, ever be anything else? then the vision stands before us of One in the form of flesh lifted up on the cross, that all who feel their sinfulness, weakness, disease may look to Him and have life. We are struck down by the need of regeneration: we are raised again by the facts of redemption, and by the love that lies behind. As these words: “Ye must be born again,” pursue us and destroy every false hope, we take refuge in this, that “God so loved the world,” etc.

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea ; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in *Ænon*, near to Salim, because there was much water there ; and they came, and 24 were baptized : for John was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's dis-26 ciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same bap-27 tizeth, and all *men* come to him. John answered and said, A

(2.) 22-24. From the town to the country, the district about Jordan. Jesus, rejected in the city, went to the provinces—first of Judea, next of Galilee. *Baptized.* Cp. iv. 2. It was natural for former disciples of the Baptist to continue this rite. Their old master and their new were on the same work. There was no abrupt change. Whether they baptized now with an explicit reference to Christ as come, and with themselves, is not certain ; the inference from the preference given by the Jew apparently to their ceremony would be favourable to the idea. It was, however, a mere transition incident in the history of the disciples themselves, and of no value besides. *Ænon*=springs or wells, the name from the circumstance, *there were many waters there*. *Salim* or *Shalem* (Gen. xxxiii. 18), in Samaria, some miles from the modern town of Nablous. Both places apparently are mentioned in Josh. xv. 32. The topography is not clear. We are tempted to conjecture that the near neighbourhood to, if not actual site within Samaria, was the Baptist's offer of repentance to the Samaritans. *Many waters*, for the multitude's refreshment (the time being likely summer), not simply for the mere rite itself, though Calvin, Lampe, and Bengel favour the inference of *immersion* from the words, the first of these adding : “Although we are to take less pains about the actual rite, only let it be in harmony with spiritual truth and the institution and rule of the Lord.”

24. *John was not yet cast into prison.* Presupposing the other Gospels, and completing their account. These pass over the early Judean ministry of our Lord, and begin with His public appearance in Galilee, which took place after the imprisonment of the Baptist.

(3.) 25-end. Dispute between the Baptist's disciples and a Jew. John's final testimony to Christ.

25. *With a Jew* ; so R.V. *Purifying* ; see note on ii. 6. It does not appear on what the discussion turned ; probably on the relation of Christ's baptism to the Baptist,—which was superior, and which had greater efficacy to cleanse sin away. Jesus and John seemed rivals. That John's disciples were concerned for their master's dignity appears from ver. 26. “The Jew” probably underrated it. To John's disciples it was an invasion of his Divine mission ; and all the more unjustifiable, that Jesus had come to John's baptism, and that their master had borne witness to Him as come on a Divine mission ; Who would therefore be expected as bound in honour not to act as a rival on John's own ground. They use the language of sectarian jealousy, not even mentioning Christ's name,—speaking of Him only in the relation of one who had got favours from their master. *All come*, etc. The fickle crowd must have a new idol to lavish their worship on.

man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.
 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the
 29 Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the
 bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom,
 which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because
 of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled.

27-36. The Baptist's answer to his disciples, which becomes in fact his closing testimony to Jesus. He allays the irritation of his zealous partisans by reminding them—(1) That heaven is the only source of spiritual gifts; if one of its servants is more eminent, heaven gains, and no true servant of lesser gifts can lose. (2) That he had, as they knew, disclaimed being the Christ, claimed only the subordinate place of preparing His way,—he is not the Bridegroom, only the Bridegroom's friend. (3) The influence of Jesus must grow, his own decay. (4) For unlike himself or any other man, Jesus, as to His person, has a heavenly origin, and therefore takes the highest place among heaven's messengers on earth. And as the utterance of men betrays their earthly origin, the utterance of Jesus proves an immediate knowledge of God. (5) And yet His testimony is not received as one might expect. Not that it is faulty or inconclusive; on the contrary. (6) Those who do receive it are convinced of God's truthfulness,—Jesus fulfilling for them every hope and satisfying every desire; His words revealing not only an immediate knowledge of God, but the fulness of the life and Spirit of God within Him. (7) For, in short, He is the beloved Son of the Father, with all power in His hands, and men's everlasting destinies depend on their individual relation to Him.

27. *A man—heaven.* A general statement, not implying a contrast between men and Jesus (Bengel), rather ranking Him in the same category, to make the contrast more striking by and by. Cp. Mark xiii. 34, “To every man his work;” 1 Cor. xii. 4 ff., “Diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit,” etc. There ought to be no unholy rivalry between the servants of the same Master, if His interests are theirs.

28 f. *Ye—fulfilled.* Cp. i. 23. “We are not competitors. *He* is the Bridegroom; I, His friend.” The Baptist may not have meant any specific allusion by this figure, which is in his usual style of graphic imagery; but the relationship of bride and bridegroom is too often used in Scripture as emblem of that between God and redeemed men to suppose that this would not be somehow suggested. See Ps. xlv.; Isa. liv. 5; Ezek. xvi. 8; Hos. ii. 19. Cp. Eph. v. 25 ff.; 2 Cor. xi. 2 (Paul speaks here as true “friend”); Rom. vii. 4; Rev. xix. 7, xxi. 9. Jesus is the Great Lover of human souls, drawing them with cords of love, constraining them with His love, and uniting them to Himself by an indissoluble bond. Cp. Mark ii. 18-20. *The friend of the bridegroom.* Cp. Judg. xiv. 20. In his hands lay, not unfrequently, the choice of the bride, her preparation, the arrangements for the wedding, and all communication previously. These friendly offices John the Baptist could exactly claim. Cp. Luke i. 17, “To make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” The *voice of the bridegroom* is an O. T. synonym for great joy, Jer. vii. 34, xvi. 9, xxv. 10. *Fulfilled*, or “is made full” (so the American Revisers).

30. *He—decrease.* Condition and aim of all true service of God in His Son. We can imagine the struggle in John's heart when he saw the ebb

30, 31 He must increase, but I *must* decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is 32 above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he 33 testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is

of the wave of interest and popularity. He was probably as free from vanity and petty feelings as most men may be; still he was a man, and could not but feel the pain of seeing his work lose hold of the popular imagination. Such inner struggles are hidden in strong men's breasts. Their results are expressed in words like this noble utterance of the Baptist. Without humbleness, and discipline, and prayer, and resolution to sacrifice all particular interests to God's, such words could not have been uttered. The Baptist steps down and lets Christ rise up on him. So it must be with all faithful servants of Christ. So was it with Paul, Phil. i. 20. We cannot lose if Christ gain. But Christ may often demand sacrifice of our dearest wishes or purposes of service in order that He may increase. The Baptist might look wistfully at Christ, and envy those who went with Christ to aid Him and share His work and fellowship, but could not join their company. He must be left; it was the condition of Christ's increase that he decrease. So there are and ought to be gains and triumphs for the Master acquired only through the utter self-extinction of the servant. We must lose our lives for Him, that He may gain; and that we, too, hereafter may gain unto eternal life.

31. *He—all.* Transition from the Baptist to Christ. He gives the reason why Jesus should increase, while all besides decrease. *He comes from above—is therefore above all.* Cp. i. 15. Mark the difference between ver. 3 and this verse:—All besides must be *born from above* to enter the kingdom of heaven; Jesus *comes from above*. An origin different from that of other men, a pre-existent condition, gives Him a supremacy over them in office as in character. See viii. 23. Read as in R.V.: “He that is of the earth is of the earth.” A proverbial phrase meaning: a man smacks of his origin; fruit tells root; human nature is human nature; see ver. 13. *Of the earth*, of ordinary human antecedents. Note the evangelist's frequent use of this phrase, e.g. “of the Father,” “of the truth,” “of the world,” “of God.” *Speaks of the earth.* Speech (the whole expression of the life) betrays whence and what the man is. The Baptist includes himself with all other servants of God as distinguished from Jesus. (Observe the habit of the Baptist to repeat his words; see i. 26–36.) An alternative reading omits the repetition *is above all*, and runs on into ver. 32, as see margin of R.V. The probabilities are in favour of retention.

32. *And—testimony.* The unique personality of Jesus points back to a unique origin. And heaven expressed itself in His utterance. His testimony of God is that of an eye- and ear-witness; cp. ver. 11, ch. viii. 23, 38, etc. Christ's revelation of God corresponds with His Divine origin. *No man*, i.e. few men. Bengel aptly calls attention to the different points of view of the Baptist and his disciples respectively, ver. 26. *All men* here. *No man*, see i. 10 f.

33. *He—true.* Read as in R.V.—*hath set His seal to this—that God is true.* Cp. i. 12. The inner witness of the Spirit seals the outward witness of Christ's word. (The seal of the Spirit on the believer follows the seal of the believer

34 true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God : for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his

on the word of Christ.) Reception of Christ is necessary in order to find Christ all He claims to be. To experience the power of the truth, we must believe it. Faith does not follow proof, but proof comes in and through faith. The heart answers to the hand of Christ, as the string to the musician, *I John v. 10.*

That God is true, i.e. as God speaks—(1) in the intuitions of the soul : for He cannot make the heart a lie to itself in its deepest cravings (Ps. xlii. 1) ; and (2) in the Scriptures of the Old Testament : making promises, raising hopes. Jesus is felt by him who accepts His testimony to be the fulfilment of all, *2 Cor. i. 20* ; cp. *Rev. i. 5*, *The faithful witness*.

34. *For—him.* All God's faithful servants are sent by Him, and speak His words. Jesus is “the Sent of God” by pre-eminence, cp. *iv. 34*, v. 36, vi. 57, etc. ; and God's very mouthpiece (cp. *Deut. xviii. 18*, and this Gospel throughout as to Christ's words), see *Heb. i. 1 ff.* He is the Word of God in person.

The argument is that the fuller and clearer the revelation of God is, the fuller and clearer the recognition of it is—as God's word—on the part of the receiver. *For not by measure He gives the Spirit* (omit “God,” as in R.V.). Who is the giver? Jesus to men? or God to Jesus? If the former, the sense would be this : the fact that through Jesus the Spirit has been poured out in His promised fulness on men who receive Him, proves that Jesus was and is personally the perfect revelation of God, in whom the fulness of Divine life had abode. If the latter, the fact that God gives the Spirit in fulness to Jesus is the reason that He speaks as one in truest, completest union with God ; Whose word is God's word ; Whose act is God's act ; see *Col. i. 19*. Remember the Baptist's witness to the descent of the Spirit on Jesus at His baptism. All former prophets received in measure of the Spirit ; and therefore their words were but partial glimpses of the character and salvation of God. Though of the Baptist it was affirmed that he should be “filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb” (*Luke i. 15*), he could not but feel that the descent by the Spirit like a dove on Jesus meant the possession by Him of the life of heaven as something which was perfectly natural to Him. He recognised Jesus as the fulfller of the O. T. promises relating to the outpouring of the Spirit on men ; His wider distribution ; His freer work in the individual soul. It was a life the Baptist was not personally here to share. The least in the kingdom was to be greater than he ; having a deeper knowledge of God, and having the Spirit of Sonship, crying, *Abba, Father*. Is it the thought of that Spirit as a son's spirit which suggested the following words? Probably so, especially when one remembers the Divine utterance at the baptism : “This is my beloved Son,” etc.

35 f. *The Father—Him.* At last the highest step is taken : Jesus is the Father's only-begotten Son. All the other relations of Jesus to God are suddenly merged in this sublimely simple one, *the Father loveth the Son*, beyond which one cannot go ; see *i. 18*, v. 20. The Father's love of the Son is the eternal life of heaven, of which life on earth is meant to be, and shall one day be, a reflection. It is the ultimate ground of all being. “The Father loveth the Son,” that is the cause, and “God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son,” that is the consequence. Jesus is the

36 hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

essence of all knowledge of God, who is Love ; being Himself the eternal object of the Father's love ; and the words He speaks, and the Spirit that is expressed in these words, tell of a life for men which is the transcript of that most perfect and unspeakably glorious life of heaven. *The Father loveth the Son.* Jesus has all the Father's love, and all the Father's power. *Hath given all things into His hand* ; see xvii. 2 (note the continual recurrence of this simple, but, in the connection, profound expression—*hath given* on Christ's lips, denoting the communication of life and all things by the Father) ; Matt. xxviii. 18. The result of this gift of power is that the eternal destinies of men are in Christ's hands. Faith in Him—the Son—is the one condition of life. Rejection of Him means abiding under the wrath of God ; cp. ver. 16 ff. It is not therefore a matter of indifference or of choice whether He is to be received. He is God's last word to men ; to be set aside at infinite loss. *The wrath of God* is the permanent emotion inseparable from a nature absolutely holy in respect of sin ; cp. Rom. i. 18. Without wrath the love of God, as it is revealed to us through Jesus Christ, would have no meaning. It is partly expressed in the righteous judgments that overtake sinners here. It will be fully expressed in their final doom, Rev. vi. 16, 17. The cross of Christ is the reconciliation of the Divine love and Divine anger, as these bear on the individual sinner who stands under the shadow of that cross. For every other man, as a sinner, there is nothing sheltering him from the impending stroke of Divine justice. *Abideth.* Faith in the Son brings us into shelter ; all men are exposed to that wrath, because all have sinned. (Calvin's cautious judgment on Augustine's inference that all are here conceived of as being doomed to death from birth should be read.) Rejection of the Son is not the cause why the wrath of God abides on the sinner. It abides on him as a sinner. But to neglect the remedy given by God when one is in need of it, and will perish without it, is to aggravate the guilt. *Abideth*, indicates in the evangelist's usual way a timeless present. It is the essential, abiding condition of a man out of Christ, whether here or hereafter, so long as the unbelief or disobedience continues. Cp. ver. 18 : "is already judged." The believer *now* has life. The unbeliever *now* is in death : "abideth in death." The believer's judgment is past. The unbeliever is judged and condemned. Issues are determined now. Fellowship with the Father and the Son is life. Absence of this is death. (It will be useful to compare the various expressions John uses in this chapter for the same idea : "to perish," "to be judged," "not to see life," "to have the wrath of God abiding ;" opp. to "to be saved," "not to be judged," "to see life," "to see the kingdom," "to enter the kingdom," "to have eternal life.") Cp. the last words of Malachi, of which this closing testimony of the Baptist is a reiteration in the language of the clearer day ; see also Ps. ii. 12. Observe also how the Baptist's description of Jesus rises from the simple assertion of His superiority to all men—as God's servant, and witness to the truth of God, through the various steps of Divine origin, and perfect revealer of God, and possessor of God's Spirit,—to this climax where He is seen seated on the throne of the universe, as the Beloved Son of the Father, and the Saviour of all men who put their trust in Him. (As with the previous part of the ch. vers. 1-21, it is questioned whether, at ver. 16, not Jesus but the evangelist John speaks ;

CHAP. IV. 1. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than 2 John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3, 4 he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he 5 must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city 6 of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well so it is doubted whether these vers. 27 - 36 contain the Baptist's thoughts only, or whether the evangelist has not added to them, or mingled with them his own. Some think that at ver. 31 there is the beginning of the evangelist's own reflections. It is certainly striking to find the Baptist utter so mature Christian truth as we find in ver. 35 f. But it was not impossible for him to do so, even though afterwards his sufferings shook his faith for a time. With regard, however, to both these paragraphs, the important point to mark is the unity of each.)

CH. IV. This chapter contains an account of our Lord's work (1) in Samaria, and (2) in Galilee. Vers. 1-3 are introductory; 4-26 give the interview with the woman of Samaria; 27-38, Christ's subsequent remarks to the disciples; 39-42, Christ's reception by and sojourn with the Samaritans; 43-end, visit to Galilee, healing of the nobleman's son. Our Lord's conversations with Nicodemus and with the woman of Samaria are meant to be laid side by side, both presenting that Divine fulness out of which all, however unlike, must receive grace for grace, while the contrasts are remarkable. We have the difference in character and position of Nicodemus and this woman, the difference in Christ's way of dealing with them,—to the former shutting the kingdom, to the latter opening it; making the one feel that no personal merit gave a right to the kingdom, and making the other feel that the greatest personal demerit need not exclude. We see how some seek Christ, how some are sought; how Christ draws every type of character, and can set forth His truth so as to gain each—the respectable Pharisee and the depraved woman; how all who enter the kingdom are made to perceive that “by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.”

1 ff. *Therefore*, linking what follows with what precedes. *Knew*, the word does not determine *how*. The rumours that had reached the Pharisees made Jesus anxious to avoid offence through apparent rivalry with the Baptist, as well as to prevent erroneous impressions about His work, and so excite hostility prematurely. *Though Jesus Himself*, etc., see iii. 22. The action of the disciples would be naturally ascribed to their Master. The evangelist felt it necessary to correct the rumour so far. Jesus could not baptize personally. The master of the house does not do the porter's work. Cp. Paul's own estimate of this outward initiation, “Christ sent me not to baptize,” etc., 1 Cor. i. 17.

4. The usual route from Judea to Galilee lay through Peræa across the Jordan, to avoid Samaria (ver. 9). Jesus knew when to set prejudice aside and when to respect it, Matt. x. 6. He was already training His disciples in the freeness of His gospel for all.

5. *Called Sychar*. Many have held this to be a nickname for Sychem or Shechem, meaning “drunken” or “lying” town. The probabilities are that these are distinct places. Sychar is identified with the modern village

was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus 8 saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were 9 gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews 10 have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and

Askar. *The parcel of ground*, etc., see Gen. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 25, and xlviii. 22. Here Joseph's bones were laid, Josh. xxiv. 32.

6. *Jacob's well (or spring)*. No reference to this in the Old Testament. The well still exists without water, and has been restored by the Palestine Exploration Society; see also Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 472 f. *Wearied*. A proof passage for the true humanity of the Lord. *Thus*, just as He was, and as things were. The evangelist has the picture in his eye. Chrysostom: "What meaneth 'thus'? Not on a throne, not on a cushion, but simply, and as He was, on the ground." *The sixth hour*, 12 noon, see i. 39. The evangelist remembers the place and time well.

7. *A woman of Samaria*. Christ has inspired reverence for womanhood. Women were despised by the Rabbis: in Christ's discipleship they held an honoured and prominent place¹ from first to last. Jesus "breaks down prejudices of sex and nation" (Westcott). *Give me to drink*. Jesus, to whose will all stores in heaven and earth could have opened out, threw Himself on her charity; in asking the favour, He made an appeal to common human kindness that goes deeper down than religion or moral antagonisms (Westcott). Also it was a way of winning her through incurring a favour.

8. *For*, etc. The reason why He solicits her good offices.

9. The woman expresses her surprise at the extraordinary condescension of a Jew in asking such a favour of a Samaritan, and a Samaritan *woman* too! You—a *Jew*—of me—a *Samaritan woman*! She is also, perhaps, inclined to banter a little before she grants the request. *For the Jews*, etc. (The clause is omitted in some MSS.) There was no friendly relation between the peoples. A rabbinic precept forbade Jews to eat bread or drink wine with the Samaritans, but ver. 8 shows that things were not carried in practice to such an extent. The Jews despised them as a mongrel people with a nondescript worship; see account of their origin in 2 Kings xvii. 24 ff. The offer of aid by the Samaritans to the Jews who returned from Babylon, whether sincerely meant or not, being declined, led to bitter animosity, which was intensified when the Samaritans built their rival temple on Mount Gerizim, ver. 20 (see Ezra iv. and Neh. iv.).

10. Jesus checks her careless vein, and turns her thoughts to the things of God from which they were far enough away, awakening her interest and curiosity. There is a threefold division in His discourse—(1) The gift of God, its nature and purposes, ver. 13 f. (2) The woman's need of it, vers. 15-18. (3) Who He Himself, the Giver, is, vers. 19-26. *If thou knewest*, etc. "If you knew what God's blessings are, and how freely He gives them, if you knew that He who speaks to you has them all in His power to give, you would be the seeker then, and He would not refuse you, He would give

¹ A place which the Church and community are slowly beginning to recognise.

said unto her, If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep : from whence then hast thou that

12 living water ? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which

you living water." She knew neither her own need as a sinner nor the grace of God, nor recognised the presence of Him through whom that grace is given.

The gift of God, and who it is, etc. It is impossible ultimately to draw fine distinctions between these two. Jesus is both gift and giver. Calvin says the latter must be taken as interpretation of the former. God's gift is His Son, iii. 16. The gift of God also is "eternal life," Rom. vi. 23. Then "He that spared not His own Son . . . how shall He not with Him also freely give us *all things*," Rom. viii. 32. This includes every special aspect of the great salvation ; all the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, deliverance from sin, pardon, righteousness, eternal life, sonship, the Holy Spirit's indwelling, and His fruits of love, joy, peace, etc., in the heart ; in short, communion with God here and hereafter. *Thou wouldest have asked of Him, etc.* The 2nd personal pronoun emphatic. Not *I* should be the suppliant, but *you*. In this case to *ask* is to be made welcome to the greatest blessings, Matt. vii. 7 ff. Had conditions of merit been laid down, these blessings were not for her, nor indeed for any sinner of us all. "All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him." Sin, like that specially of this woman, destroys faith in man as well as faith in God. In the life of sin the rule is nothing for nothing. In the things of God grace reigns. The best is offered to, is pressed on, the most unworthy, Isa. iv. 1. *He would have given thee.* All the Father's gifts come through the Son. He has all power ; cp. iii. 35 f. ; Acts ii. 33, v. 31. Jesus speaks here with conscious Divine authority ; cp. vi. 35, 37 ; xiv. 6. *Living water* : a common expression for running spring water (cp. Gen. xxvi. 19 ; Jer. ii. 13), to distinguish it from water of a cistern or reservoir, and used as an emblem of spiritual blessings with great frequency in the Old Testament. And as all these are regarded as the result of the communication to men of the Holy Spirit of God, He Himself as a personal gift is specially pointed to, e.g. Ps. xlvi. 4 ; Isa. xli. 17, xliv. 3 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25 ff. ; ch. vii. 37 ff. ; Rev. xxii. 1. See foregoing remarks on "the gift of God." Of course for this woman such specific allusion would be out of place. Jesus simply offered her the true satisfaction which her poor craving heart was vainly seeking in sin. God's gift—for the asking—and—from me !

11 f. *Sir.* The woman is incredulous, but more respectful. Though not quite clear of His meaning, she feels instinctively the force of Christ's personality. He implied that she needed His charity more than He hers ; and her sense of sinfulness made her personally weak. But she can shelter under hereditary privileges. She knows she has little righteousness of her own ; therefore believes in the imputation of Jacob's ; and takes refuge there. To live in sin and trust some outward privilege is not so rare. "Father Jacob" was more than the God of Jacob.

The well : a different word from that in ver. 6 and ver. 14 : meaning rather a pool or cistern, as compared with a running, living spring.

Art thou greater ? (the pronoun emphatic) meaning : that is not possible, though thou appearest to say so. *Father Jacob*, cp. Matt. iii. 9, ch.

gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children,
 13 and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whoso-
 14 ever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever
 drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;
 but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a
 15 well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman

viii. 33, 39, 53. As to the boasted descent from Jacob through Joseph, see note on ver. 9. *Who gave us the well.* A Samaritan conceit. "This water was good enough for Jacob, and for us: what better have you?"

13 f. Jesus makes no comparisons between Jacob and Himself; contrasts simply the effects of the drinking of the water of this well with those of drinking the water which He gives. *Shall thirst again.* A truism—unless Jesus were taking that well, and the woman's daily toil at it, as typical of truth in a higher region. The thirst of the body leads over to the thought of the thirst of the soul, to the objects which seem to offer satisfaction, and are weakly and eagerly applied to, and in vain. The woman's daily drawing from this well was a parable, speaking of her own poor, vain, sinful life. She knew, as every sinner knows, what it is to thirst again, and thirst more insatiably than ever, after drinking of "this water."

The woman asked, "Whence hast thou" etc.? Jesus replies by repeating that He is the giver. Observe the twice-repeated clause: *the water which I shall give him* (the pronoun *I* is emphatic in the first), see notes on ver. 10. The effects of drinking the water which Jesus gives are twofold—(1) *Shall never thirst*: lit. "shall not thirst for ever"; cp. viii. 51 f., x. 28, xi. 26, xiii. 8. The gifts of Christ, *i.e.* His own fellowship in the Holy Spirit, satisfy all the cravings of human nature. In communion with Him, mind, heart, and conscience, are at rest. John's absolute way of speaking must be kept in view: his ignoring of processes, and laying hold of results; *e.g.* iii. 18, v. 24. A single draught is not enough: we must drink constantly; and the changed taste of the renewed man thirsts constantly for the water which Christ gives. But a single draught is enough to convince that it is the water of life; see Rev. xxi. 6. (2) *Shall become in him a well of water*, etc. The second effect, which is really the cause of the first. Christ's gift becomes an ever-springing well within. The believer carries his own source of refreshment with him, as he possesses the life in the Spirit. That life itself is the spring. He is *himself* the spring,—being in communion with Christ, and "the spring has no thirst" (Bengel). Mark—(1) The contrast with all outer sources = *in him*. The soul is renewed, the man re-made in Christ's own image. (2) The independence, therefore, of all earthly conditions for happiness or peace. (3) The individuality of salvation—Jesus dealing with the soul directly, and the soul directly with Him. (4) Hence its Divine freeness: "I shall give." (5) The rich, infinitely varied abundance of this supply, wide as humanity, coming from God, and bearing men again to God. The fruitfulness of the receiver is implied, cp. vii. 37 f., though not here expressed. (6) Lastly, the infallible certainty of the hope cherished by the receiver unto life eternal. The life he lives has the promise and hope of the future in it; being "righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). It is as a seed springing up to bear fruit in life eternal. Christ can do abundantly above what we ask or think.

15. The woman's interest is fairly roused. She asks—as Jesus had invited

saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, 16 neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, 17 call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou 18 hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: 19 in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I 20 perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in her to do—*Sir, give me this water*: her object was earthly and confused: *that I thirst not, neither*, etc.: still a dim groping for a good thing; a confession—to some extent—of a vague, unsatisfied craving at heart; a want which neither “father Jacob” nor his well could ever meet. Relief from outward toil was not the only relief she began to think of, see vi. 34. It is a point gained to feel the desirableness of Christ even at the circumference of life’s interests. (*Come all the way hither*, so R.V.; the reading of best MSS.)

16. Jesus drives the ploughshare of conviction of need and sin deeper down. He leaves the charm of parable and comes to unwelcome fact. The woman—like the stony ground hearer—has been receiving with joy the promises of a great good. Christ seeks now to make her understand the true nature of that good, and how much more she needs it than she thinks, and how much more is implied in receiving it than she thinks. Observe—(1) Christ’s self-respect. *Go, call thy husband*, etc.; respect therefore even for the poor sinner before Him. The conversation had lasted long enough. (2) Christ refrains from pressing home personal truths, from extorting private confessions: even *He* regarded the sacredness of human individuality when on earth; see Luke vii. 48 ff. (3) He suggests the source of the woman’s evil life in yielding to her own impulses—forgetful of ties binding to duty or love. *Give me this water*—that demand really symbolized her past vain life. A woman’s impulse is her power and her weakness. Jesus says: Remember others who have claims on you. (4) He sends a flash of light into the dark soul—an arrow into her conscience. A natural remark is at times the most embarrassing, especially where there is conscious guilt. It was a startling interruption, entirely unexpected.

17 f. The impatient evasion was a suppression of truth amounting to suggestion of what was false. She meant that she had nobody to consider but herself; that was the sin and sorrow of her life. She would rather have these pages unturned. Ah! what would she not have given to be able to fall back in presence of this stranger, who penetrated every disguise, on the consciousness of a pure and innocent past! It could not be. The time is sure to come when sin is bitter indeed.

Jesus shows her that He knows the kind of life she has led and is living—touching the painful subject gently but faithfully. What He had been offering her was as real as her immoral life; and was meant, if it meant anything for her, to save her from its degradation and curse; not to allure with fine hopes only, but to cast out the unclean spirit out of the heart. The woman had never been spoken to by men in this way. Those who knew her—as Christ did—avoided her, called her a depraved being: this man knew her thoroughly, yet spoke gently to her. There is a lesson here for all Christian workers.

19 f. *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.* Because *He* knew and read her

this mountain ; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where
 21 men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe
 me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain,
 22 nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye

character and past conduct. Tacit confession of her guilt. Yet she was not repelled. Christ's way with her had been such as to check anything like indignant pride or fear. She was searched and known ; spoken to as none besides had ever spoken to her : yet she is not despised. *Our fathers*, etc. With a woman's dexterity, and uneasy under the exposure, she seeks to turn the conversation into a less unpleasant channel. She can talk on religion too, so long as the subject is kept away from her own life. She knows something about the famous standing controversy between Jews and Samaritans. Perhaps this Prophet will tell her more : what He thinks. On such an inviting topic He will overlook what she has no desire to have dragged into light. Or she may with greater skill still mean : our authorities hold one way of worship ; yours, another. Which are right ? When good and earnest men differ, can an ignorant woman be condemned for following her impulses ? *Our fathers*. The use and abuse of appeals to antiquity, cp. vi. 31. Reverence for the past, and faith and hopefulness in present and future, must go together (see Calvin's long and valuable note).

This mountain. Gerizim, see Deut. xi. 29, xxvii. 12, at the foot of which lies the well. A rival temple was built by Manasseh, who was driven from Jerusalem by Nehemiah (xiii. 28). It was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, 129 B.C. ; the worship, however, continued in some form, and continues to this day. Plausible grounds for this schismatic course would not be wanting (see above references to Deuteronomy). Remember also that the Samaritans accepted no other sacred Scripture than the five Books of Moses, of which they had a copy of their own, the Samaritan Pentateuch, differing somewhat from the commonly received version.

21. Jesus answers cautiously her desultory and evasive question, taking care only to come round to the main point again. *Believe me* : perhaps a usual phrase of Christ's, see xiv. 11, and cp. the frequent "Verily, verily, I say unto you." *The hour cometh* : also an expression frequently on Christ's lips, ver. 23, v. 25, 28, xvi. 2, 32 ; cp. ii. 4, xvii. 1, vii. 6, 30. All was ordained by the Father. Jesus in this Gospel treads a predestined path, see ii. 4, note. What hour ? The hour of gospel worship. When the institutions and restrictions of the old covenant are done away, and the local becomes the universal. Neither here nor there : because anywhere. Locality disappears in Christ, who is at the right hand of God, the High Priest of men. Not even at *Jerusalem*, where the Lord Himself was crucified. Pilgrimages to a sacred shrine are to be judged by this word, 1 Tim. ii. 8 : "I will that men pray everywhere." *Shall ye worship*. Samaritans and Jews, and therefore all men. It matters little where you worship, Christ says ; it matters much whom. *The Father*, see i. 18, iii. 35. This great and glorious word settled everything : nature, form, and place of worship. For worship depends on the Being worshipped. A father's worship is the reverence, obedience, love of his children. This may and will receive certain outward expressions, for he would be a singular child who never cared to speak directly to his father ; but it is shown in the whole spirit of the life. Then wherever there is a true child's heart, there is the sanctuary

know not what ; we know what we worship : for salvation is 23 of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the

and shrine of the Father. By this word Jesus “admits the woman to the very citadel of the faith” (Bengel). It was more important for her to know whom to worship than where : it would bring her to feel more acutely that whether Jew or Samaritan were right, she was all wrong. The conception of God as Father is the last and greatest revelation. There was a shadowy Fatherhood among the heathen : *Dicunt, hominumque pater* ; but it had not reality. “For no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.” Beyond such conception it is not possible to go, if Fatherhood means love. Sublimity is here united to simplicity. This word, expressing the highest reach of religious thought, may have been just the word fitted to complete for this stray sheep the work of conviction, recalling the home of childhood and long-lost innocence, and a parent’s affection and care. And that love, the one bond to a better life perhaps, she now finds to be a faint image of a love infinitely more tender, more patient still, the love of a Father in heaven who was stretching out His arms inviting her back to His heart.

22. It was of greater consequence that this woman be saved from an impure life than that she be told whether Jew or Samaritan were right. Yet one of these was right, the other wrong ; and Jesus could not overlook this entirely. He would not subscribe to the opinion that if a man’s morals are correct, his beliefs are of minor importance. The true knowledge of God is necessary to true worship, and that true knowledge issues from the revelation of God Himself to men. There is a godliness according to doctrine, and a doctrine according to godliness. In a few words He gives final judgment on the dispute. *Ye worship what ye do not know ; we worship what we know.* It was not the place that signified so much as the object and aim of worship, the feelings and hopes cherished in it and by it. The Samaritan religion was incoherent and vague ; its *motif* was rivalry ; all that was positive in it was taken from the Jews. “In opposition to Jerusalem it desired to go back right into the primitive age of Israel, and prided itself on being the continuation of the real ancient people. But it broke loose from the continuous culture which had gone on without interruption in Judea and Jerusalem from the time of David” (Ewald). The reason why the Jews (with whom Jesus identifies Himself) know what they worship is : *For salvation is of the Jews.* It is the definite, expected salvation of God, promised to the fathers. This hope kept their religion in life, hope of a great and lasting deliverance from their sins and sorrows through a great deliverer ; see the testimony of all their prophets. The Samaritans looked back to “the fathers.” The Jews looked on to the salvation of God. The prophets did not suffer them to rest in the past. Prophecy means progress. Jesus, of course, speaks of the Divine ideal for the people, far from being realized by them as a whole, yet reflected in individual faith and hope, and sufficient to keep Israel separate until Christ came, and the design of God was reached. *Salvation, I am the Saviour.* In Christ all God’s promises are Yea. And Christ must be a Jew.

23. *But . . . him*, cp. v. 25. Jesus having briefly judged the controversy, returns to the greater point—what all future worship must be. *And now is :* He is narrowing the circle to its centre on *Himself*. That hour had

true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship *him* in

indeed come for this woman and her fellow-villagers, ver. 39. *The true worshippers*, i.e. the ideal worshippers ; true, not in opposition to false or insincere, but to the partial and imperfect, see note on i. 9. The Old Testament saints were true worshippers up to the measure of the light God gave them. The “true light” alone makes true worshippers absolutely. And the mark of such worship is *in spirit and truth*. It is independent of place, of outward forms and ceremonies (Phil. iii. 3), as under the old arrangement, and it must be intelligent. It is communion of the spirit of man with the Eternal ; it is communion based on that final and full knowledge of Himself, as the Father, which the Eternal has given to man in Jesus Christ, see 1 John i. 1-3 ; but for this, man’s spirit must become the abode of the Spirit of the Father and Son. What is common to us with, and what is different from, the Jews, are both given here. According to Calvin : “Faith and a pure conscience,” Rom. i. 9 ; Eph. vi. 18 ; see i. 14. *For such doth the Father seek.* It is not will-worship either, but that which is inspired by the knowledge of the Father and of the Father’s gracious desire to have men as His true children. The Father is seeking in the Son for true worshippers, and therefore men are encouraged and enabled to seek Him in spirit and truth, i. 17. (The precise rendering of the Greek is doubtful, the emphasis being laid either on the *sort of worshippers*, or on the *desire* of the Father. We have decided for the latter.)

24. *God is a Spirit* (or “Spirit”). Notice the change from “the Father” to “God.” The word *Father* needs no explanation. It interprets the common human instinct. And if in relation to men God is found and felt as a Father through His Son, in His own absolute being He is “a Spirit” or “Spirit.” The absolute detachment of God from all limitations of space and time is implied. Our own personality, our consciousness of existing, of thinking, of willing, are the surest guide to the understanding of God’s essential nature. Cp. John’s other sublime expressions: “God is light,” “God is love,” 1 John i. 5, iv. 8. It is superfluous to say that the spirituality of God was not a thought alien to the Old Testament. On the contrary, it underlay the whole revelation, was taken for granted in the prohibition of the Second Commandment, implied in the construction of the Tabernacle, was continually being held up by the prophets as counter-active to the external rites of sacrificial temple worship ; cp. Ex. xx. 22 f. ; Isa. xxxi. 3, lvii. 15, lxvi. 1 ; 1 Kings viii. 27. The full significance of this truth was, of course, only gradually laid hold of by Israel under the training of the prophets, Isa. i., lviii. ; Ps. li. ; Micah vi. 8. And as the future life was not clearly revealed until Christ came, died, and rose again, so the spirituality of God and His Fatherhood, it is to be noted, are here brought together side by side by our Lord, and perhaps the same relation subsists between these truths respectively. Both are necessary to our true conception of God. As Spirit alone we might reverence Him, not love Him : hardly believe He was an object to love. As Father alone we might think of Him with feelings unworthy of His glory. The Spirit guards the Fatherhood, and the Fatherhood makes the Spirit personal and real. The worship of God therefore depends on the God worshipped : He is Spirit, and He is the Father seeking men with unspeakable love to be His children.

25 spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he 26 will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest 28 thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith 29 to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that 30 ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

25 f. Jesus was rising beyond the poor woman's ability to follow. She takes refuge in what she knows, that Messiah comes, who should make every difficulty plain. It is her theology. (The Samaritans had faith in a coming Messiah whom they called "the Converter." The modern Samaritans look for one they call "the Mahdi," a name of some recent interest.) She knew enough already, had she only put it in practice, to have made her life different. What she needed was a Messiah to save her from sin. And Jesus, with a clearness and directness unparalleled, perhaps because in the woman's mind the idea of the Christ was not mingled and confused with political hopes, disclosed Himself to her (cp. ix. 37). And here the interview broke off. Who else but the Christ could He be who had presented Himself to her as giver of living waters to quench the thirst of the soul; who had caused her to feel how intense that thirst was, and how vainly she had tried to quench it from troubled springs; who had roused her to a sense of her need and sin, and then had disclosed the fatherly heart of God yearning over this prodigal daughter, and going out in purposes of mercy and love to her? None but Christ can read off to us our inmost heart and life, and then lest we be broken read off to us the heart of God the Father desiring us, notwithstanding all our sin.

27. *With a woman* (not the definite article), see ver. 7, notes. The sense of woman's inferiority and the sense of delicacy, both accentuated in the case of a Samaritaness. The Rabbinic saying is well known, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast not made me a woman." Mark the respect of the disciples for their Master. Calvin's application is fine—the need of silence in the experience of any work or word of God that is offensive to us.

28 f. *Left her waterpot*. The same word as in ii. 6. The effect of Christ's self-disclosure to her could not have been better described. She forgot her errand at the well. It was the expulsive power of a new affection. Temporal needs give way to spiritual. *To the men*: the people she found first in the village. *Who told me all*, etc. What impressed her most, and naturally. Not what He told her of God as a Father or as Spirit, or of the controversy between Jew and Samaritan, but the truth that touched and roused conscience. More important this than the "all things" besides, ver. 25. Our thought of Christ shall be as our need of Christ; and the truest thought of Him is in the light of His word that searches out the secret idols of our souls. *Can this be the Christ?* a question expressive of doubt, and yet more of belief.

31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying,
 32 Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that
 33 ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another,
 34 Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? Jesus saith unto
 them, My meat *is* to do the will of him that sent me, and to
 35 finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and
 then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your
 eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to
 36 harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth
 fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that

32. The joy of the Lord in restoring a lost sinner, Isa. liii. 11; Luke xv. 6. His forgetfulness of the needs of the body is like that of the woman, ver. 28. He had begun to see of the travail of His soul and was satisfied, Rev. iii. 20. *I* emphatic, “I for my part.” *Ye*, also emphatic, as opposed to Christ.

34. *My meat.* He is refreshed by His labour for a soul. Yet it was presently to be their joy, in measure, as well; as Jesus goes on to tell them, ver. 38. *That I may do the will*, etc., expressive of the Divine purpose in the Father’s mission of the Son. *Of Him that sent me*, see notes on iii. 34. The Father *sends*, the Son is *the sent*. Nothing is more frequent on Christ’s lips in this Gospel than His absolute dependence on the Father: He can neither do nor speak anything, but as the Father inspires Him. They are at one: also they are One, x. 30. In His mediatorial work—as the *sent*—the Son is subordinate to the Father who sends Him, cp. xiv. 28. *The will*: see vi. 38 f. Note that the nature, however, of that will or work is here the point of interest: simply the perfect giving and self-surrender of Christ in doing it. The will of God is our duty, and doing it becomes our delight, it is the very life of the Christian. “Hallowed be Thy name. Thy will be done,” then, “Give us our daily bread,” see vi. 27. Elektra says: “Let it be my meat only not to wound my conscience” (Soph. *El.* 363 f.). *To finish*: or “fulfil” or “accomplish” (R.V.), see v. 36, xvii. 4, xix. 30. Doing the will leads to finishing the work of God. *His work*, comprehensive of the one great work of obedience to the law and its penalty,—the consequence of the reason of Christ’s assuming our human nature, together with all the gracious ministries of His life, and the result of which is that man’s work is simply faith in Himself, vi. 29, and the following of Him.

35. *Lift up your eyes*, etc. The Samaritans probably were approaching. “Coming through the cornfields now tinged with green” (Meyer). The “harvest” of *men*—Samaritans and all besides. Cp. His word to the apostles: “I will make you fishers of men,” Matt. iv. 19. “The time of the New Testament is the harvest” (Bengel). (The harvest meant was the wheat harvest, reaped in April; the time would be therefore somewhere about the beginning of the year.) *White already unto harvest*: or, *White unto harvest*. *Already he that reaps*, etc. The former makes the better sense, though the latter is upheld by Westcott and Hort.

36–38. The word of God, spoken by His servants of the Old Testament “at sundry times and in divers manners,” is the sowing. There was a long interval of waiting and of preparation until the fulness of the times came.

37 reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true,
 38 One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that
 whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye
 are entered into their labours.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him
 for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all
 40 that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto
 him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and

With the appearance of the Son of God the harvest was ripe. His apostles and all Christian workers are the reapers, who have this joy of spiritual harvesting,—gathering men into the kingdom of heaven. Work for God among men after His Son's life among them and death for them, compared with work for God among men before this revelation of Divine love, the turning-point of the world's history, is as harvest work compared with breaking the ground and sowing the seed in spring. This is toil for which there is no present return. The other is toil that fills the hand with present wage. But in the work of God's kingdom he who sows in tears shall reap in joy: the sower and reaper shall be equal in the long result: their reward shall be the same. Also such is the power of Christ's love that the sower and reaper shall have their joy simultaneously. *Wages*: the crown of life that faileth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. The reward of the true servant must be the share in the joy of the Lord: the joy in the gathering fruit to life eternal. *In this is the word true*, etc., i.e. finds its ultimate ideal realized; it is the highest illustration of the principle. Probably a common proverbial saying; cp. Micah vi. 15. *One soweth, and another reapeth*. Note the distribution of labour and of gift in God's service: and still even under the New Testament there is for some of Christ's servants the sowing, and for others the reaping,—for all there is toil, and none must envy the greater apparent success of another who seems both to sow and to reap. *I sent you*. Hence He is Himself in the position, clothed with the authority, of the Lord of the harvest, Matt. xiii. 3. The pronoun is emphatic, marking the source of their mission as well as the nature of it. To what mission does Jesus refer? To some previous one in Judea? or is it an allusion to their whole work? Probably the latter: as the following clause speaks of that work in general terms: *others have laboured, and ye are entered into their labour*. The others are, of course, all the previous prophets and servants of God—including the Baptist.—Note, as well as the distribution, the continuity of the workers of the kingdom of God. The methods of work change—workers die: the work itself remains; and other workers enter the fields. All the workers, differing widely in gift, in mode of exercise, time and place, are sent from the one Lord, inspired by the same spirit of love to God and to men; have the same object—to gather immortal souls into the kingdom; and all shall in the end have one common reward in the life eternal.

39. Faith in Christ reposing on the testimony of others: one of John's frequent thoughts, see notes on i. 7; but the testimony of others is of service simply as it leads us to hear and receive Christ for ourselves; cp. ver. 42. The word of a poor sinful woman becomes saying. "A seed shall serve Him, it shall be counted for a generation." The Samaritans were less prejudiced than the Jews.

41 he abode there two days. And many more believed because
 42 of his own word ; and said unto the woman, Now we believe,
 not because of thy saying : for we have heard *him* ourselves,
 and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the
 world.

43 Now, after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee :
 44 for Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in
 45 his own country. Then, when he was come into Galilee, the

40. The grace and love of Christ conquer all earthly prejudices. *Two days* ;
 an accurate detail.

41 f. The ground and nature of their belief.—(1) *His word* : revealing the Father, and the Father's will for His erring children ; assuring them that He was sent by the Father to declare His love. Jesus is Himself, not by word only, but by all His life, death, resurrection, the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness. His uttered word is the perfect reflection of *The Word*, *i.e.* Himself. Observe in both cases, ver. 39 and ver. 41, that the testimony afforded by the word — whether of Jesus personally or of Jesus through another bearing witness to His power — without any further signs, was sufficient to bring conviction. Jesus does not appear to have wrought any miracles here. The word itself convinced them of sin, righteousness, and of judgment. (2) The nature or contents of their belief. *We know that this is truly the Saviour of the world* (omit "the Christ"). *We have heard, and we know.* "Faith cometh by hearing." Knowledge in this region is the child of faith. Their conviction was immediate and personal : the testimony of the woman was a stepping-stone to this, but they did not rest on her word. They formed their own conclusions about Christ when they heard Him. What we know of Christ, if the knowledge is unto salvation, must arise from an individual experience of Christ's grace and power. We cannot rest in the experience of another. The Holy Spirit works the secret assurance in each heart opening to Christ ; 1 John v. 10, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." *The Saviour of the world.* They felt that it was not a question with Jesus as to Jew and Samaritan : they felt that He was seeking *men*, all men, as the lost children of the Father in heaven. The Spirit of Christ delivers us from all partisanship, and widens our horizon.

43-end. Jesus in Galilee. Cure of the nobleman's son. *After the two days*, R.V. The reason for His going away to Galilee, John finds in the proverb which Jesus was in the habit of using : that a prophet has no honour in his own country. The proverb had sufficient illustration in the history of the Jews. Calvin gives the double origin for this proverb—(1) The natural slowness to believe great things of one who has been familiar from childhood ; (2) the jealousy of the distinction of our acquaintances. *Testified*, at various times. *His own country* : referred to Galilee in general, and Nazareth in particular, in Matt. xiii. 54 ff., Mark vi. 1 ff., Luke iv. 24, in which passages Jesus made this remark about a prophet's reception. Here it would seem John uses the words in the wider sense, meaning generally Judea ; writing to men who lived far from Palestine, and to whom local differences were unknown (cp. also his explanatory clause, *for they also went*, etc.) ; writing also after our Lord had been rejected—not by this or that special section, but by the Jews as a whole. Rejected by the Jerusalem Jews, the representa-

Galileans received him, having seen all things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again unto Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son
 47 was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down and heal his son: for he was
 48 at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye
 49 see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman
 50 saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man

tives of the nation, Himself a true-born Jew of Bethlehem, Jesus went to Samaria, where He was welcomed, and to Galilee, where, too, He was received. The reason of this reception was perhaps suspicious: *having seen all*, etc.; yet the Galileans were freer from religious prejudice than the Jews in Jerusalem, though they were earthly-minded, ch. vi. (The explanation is admittedly difficult. Various ways of solution are attempted. The only others we need mention are (1) that of Meyer: Jesus brought His reputation with Him from abroad, and therefore the Galileans received Him; otherwise and before this they had rejected Him. And (2) that of Abbott, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, who suggests that Jesus sought to flee from the popularity in Judea, and goes to Galilee, where He hoped to find peace because of the notorious disparagement of men who are known and native.)

46 f. *Nobleman* or *king's officer*, military or civilian, at Herod's court. Herod Antipas was at present the tetrarch of Galilee; his court was at Tiberias. Jesus had been in Capernaum before; and this officer had been aware of His power, and believed—to some degree apparently. He had not joined himself to Jesus then, but now that suffering has entered his home, and the father's heart is yearning over his child, necessity impels. Sorrow levels and humbles, and so makes a path into the heart for the Great Healer. Observe here, even in unlikely surroundings, the Spirit of God is at work; and note the universal range of Christ's influence over the Pharisee, over the Samaritan, and over the Herodian courtier respectively. *Whose son*: the phrase may indicate an only son.

48 f. *Signs and wonders*. *Inner* and *outer* aspects of a miracle, see ii. 11. The second term is never used by itself in the New Testament. It is the aspect of a miracle which involves least of all any spiritual insight into it. Not, of course, to deprecate miracles, but to deprecate the state of mind and feeling which regarded the miracles, and little or nothing else. Suggesting also a contrast with the Samaritans, whom he had found ready to believe His word. Jesus means: "Unless I do such striking outward deeds you will not believe in me." Perhaps also: "You seek me when you need me to help you in such trouble, and to work miraculous deliverance." A reflection generally on the Galileans. *Come down*, etc. "A double weakness of faith" (Bengel). Jesus must be personally present to cure: and His power was limited by death; cp. xi. 21, 32.

50. Because of the faith in His power, even though with limits, Jesus with His usual grace does not refuse the request; for a bruised reed He will not break. And a father's distress touched His heart. But He put the weak

believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he
 51 went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants
 52 met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth. Then
 enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend.

And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the
 53 fever left him. So the father knew that *it was* at the same
 hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and
 54 himself believed, and his whole house. This *is* again the

faith to a severe test in order to strengthen it, and to make the man feel that true faith would rest in His word without external signs to confirm it, as well as to show that all power sprang out of His own will, and that His word therefore could execute itself independently of any limits of space or time or state. The same word has authority to heal the soul, to cast out unclean spirits, to give peace. His words are “spirit and life,” vi. 63. *Thy son lives.* A miracle of omnipresence or omniscience, or both. Jesus willed that the boy should live: and He knew that in consequence the crisis was past. Ps. cxvii. 20. *The man believed the word which Jesus spake to him.* Such simple faith in Christ, or in Christ’s promise, brings eternal life, removes mountains, is the secret of spiritual strength and peace. Observe there is an order in faith: there are degrees of faith. Carefully noted by this evangelist there are—(1) The faith which is born of the signs and wonders; (2) the faith in the word which Jesus speaks; (3) lastly, the faith *in or on Jesus Himself.* In this incident these degrees are all marked, vers. 49, 50, 53 (see xiv. 11, 12, where the three stages are also noted by Jesus Himself). Cp. Nicodemus’ confession, iii. 2; then the confession of the Samaritans, ver. 41 f. The Jews would not believe unless a “sign” were given, 1 Cor. i. 22. Jesus proceeded always on the supposition that truth witnesses to itself, if there be a truth-loving and truth-seeking mind, see vii. 17. This craving for supernatural wonders is reflected in the modern desire for proof of the Christian religion and claims of Christ apart from Christ Himself. And even among Christians themselves there is often an unhealthy appetite for outward show and success that overlooks the real hidden power of the gospel, xx. 29.

51 f. *Going down*, as also in vers. 47 and 49. See ii. 12, note. *When he began to amend*: lit. to do bravely, a peculiar phrase—the evangelist has reproduced the homely idiom probably first used by the servants to the father. *Yesterday at the seventh hour*, i.e. one o’clock afternoon, reckoning by Jewish time (see i. 39, note). To the objection that so long an interval would hardly have elapsed, as Cana was not more than twenty-five miles from Capernaum, it is sufficient to answer that as the Jewish day was from sunrise to sunset, a *new day* was only about five hours distant from the hour mentioned in the text.

53. The father recognised a direct connection of cause and effect between the word of Jesus and the recovery of his son. *Himself believed*, believed in Jesus so as to accept Him as Lord and Saviour. Such a faith would grow as to contents with subsequent disclosures of Christ’s fulness. The moral attitude implied in faith was here perfect. Jesus might be far more than this man yet thought; but his trust in Him was absolute. *His whole house*, cp. ver. 39. The power of faith in Christ to propagate itself by testimony is

second miracle *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

CHAP. V. I. After this there was a feast of the Jews ; and Jesus 2 went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue

one of John's common points. Also, note a parent's influence on his home, and the blessing of a home united in the faith and love of Christ. Such gratitude is not always the result of such a deliverance from sorrow.

54. *The second sign.* The turning of water into wine was the first. (It will be useful to compare this incident with that narrated of the centurion of Capernaum whose servant was sick, Matt. viii. ; Luke vii.)

This closes one section of the Gospel. With ch. v. another cycle begins.

6. *The conflict begins. Jesus cures an impotent man in Jerusalem. Proclaims Himself the Son in relation to the Father. Is rejected by the Jews, ch. v.*

In ch. v. Christ exhibits His relation to the Father, and in ch. vi. His relation to men.

CH. V. Jesus goes up to a feast in Jerusalem, heals an impotent man on the Sabbath, is persecuted by the Jews for breaking their Sabbath law, and defends His act by claiming to work only as His Father works, by which defence He inflames the hostility of the Jews still more hotly against Him, since they regard the claim as implying equality with God ; and this leads Jesus to explain at length what *His relationship as Son to the Father* signifies. Jesus then states the witness on which He relies as proof of His claims, and finally charges the Jews with culpable disregard of the evidence that makes an unequivocal appeal to them in His favour. The chapter may be divided into the following sections :—(1) The miracle, 1-9 ; (2) The sequel, 10-18 ; (3) The Father and the Son, 19-30 ; (4) The testimony to Jesus, 31-39 ; (5) The rejection of Jesus by the Jews, and its reason, 40-47.

(1.) The miracle, 1-9. I f. *After these things*: a favourite phrase of the evangelist (also “after this”), ii. 12, iii. 22, vi. 1, vii. 1, xi. 7, 11, xix. 28, 38, xxi. 1 ; the singular denoting the immediate consequence, the plural an indefinite one. *A feast.* R. V. says in margin that many ancient authors read *the feast*. If this were genuine, it would lead us to infer the occasion as that of the Passover, see vi. 4 (R. V.) ; but it has not the weight of the accepted reading. The feast was probably that of Purim, celebrated in memory of the great deliverance under Ahasuerus, see Esth. ix. 21, 26, held on 14th and 15th of Adar, i.e. March ; but the point is much disputed. The present tense, *There is at (or in) Jerusalem*, does not prove that the city was still standing when John wrote. *By the sheep[gate],* see Neh. iii. 1, xii. 39 ; the site is not identified with certainty, probably at the north-east quarter of the city. *A pool:* lit. a place for diving, or “a swimming-bath.” The verb is used (simple and compound) in Acts xxvii. 42 f. Jerusalem was rich in pools, according to Josephus. The sheep used in sacrifice were washed in this pool. *Bethesda*, in Heb., i.e. Aramaean, according to Westcott and Hort, “Bethzatha ;” margin, “Bethsaida ;” both given by R. V. as alternative. The derivation of the word in R. V. is given as meaning “House of Mercy” = “Beth-Hesed,” which might point to some charitable foundation (see *Palestine*, by Rev.

3 Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the
4 moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made
5 whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.
6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made
7 whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while
8 I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith
9 unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately

Arch. Henderson, Clark's Series of Handbooks for Bible Classes, p. 125). A hill on the north-east side of the city bore the name of Bezetha. The position is involved in doubt. Robinson identifies Bethesda with the "Fountain of the Virgin," an intermittent spring, in the south-east of the city, however.

3 f. The water possessed medicinal properties, and had probably an intermittent spring. (Omit the last clause of ver. 3 and the whole of ver. 4. The words were doubtless added to the text from the margin in consequence of the words of the impotent man in ver. 7 about the troubling of the waters. Remark only that the ascription of the natural facts to a supernatural cause at work unseen is neither unreasonable nor unscriptural.) *Lay a multitude of them that were sick, etc.*: what may be seen on a higher grade of social life at any modern Spa.

5. Those who think they can see hidden significations in such facts, refer this to the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, and regard this man as a type of the Jewish people's spiritual state—one of paralysis; so they regard the woman of Samaria with her five husbands as type of the Samaritan people with their mongrel worship. It is not necessary to discuss the supposition. The length of his illness, not of the time he had lain at this pool, is meant.

6. Christ's omniscience. He had a power of discernment such as no man has or ever had. He selected the worst case. *Wouldst thou be made whole?* So R.V. An apparently needless question (strangely misunderstood by some, who hold it as meant to unmask an impostor), and yet after such an interval of helpless and hopeless suffering the very *desire* dies. The will becomes inert. If this be true physically, much more is it true spiritually. Jesus appeals to him to rouse interest, hope, effort; for without some degree of such preparation in a man He could never act on him so as to bless.

7. The man explains that he would if he could, but believing the popular notion about the waters, that only the first who plunges into them at the season of "troubling" could be cured, he had never—such was his weakness, and such his friendlessness—been able to secure this advantage. It was each for himself at that well. *Troubled*: the brief movement marked by air-bubbles breaking, or the like.

8 f. Christ's object was gained. The man was interested enough to explain his case and his difficulty in a way that showed his belief in the

the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked : and on the same day was the sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day : it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said 12 unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and

sympathy of his hearer at least. Hence the immediate command, *Rise*, etc. (cp. Mark ii. 9). Jesus intended by these separate injunctions, “Rise ! Take up, etc. ! Walk !” perhaps to indicate the perfectness of the cure, and certainly its immediateness. The word that commanded the man to rise, etc., gave him the power to do so ; but that word was received through the medium of the faith already kindled, though feeble, in the man by the word of Christ. He was made whole as he received the word and believed it ; then he rose, took up his bed, and walked. *Spiritually*, Christ in His gospel says this to all, but all have not the faith which is alone the medium through which the transforming power of His word can reach our hearts. Sin paralyses the will, as well as quenches the desire to be healed. The answer to this command, *Rise*, etc., is too often, I will not, or, I cannot, or, I must wait until I feel able. But the exertion to respond to God’s will for us in Christ brings the power and salvation. *It was the Sabbath on that day*, or “a Sabbath,” etc. There is no good ground for thinking the day other than the ordinary weekly Sabbath, and the argument proceeds on this understanding. Doubtless our Lord acted on purpose to raise the question.

(2.) The sequel, 10-18. 10. *It is not lawful to take up thy bed.* The Jews would quote Jer. xvii. 21 ff., and Neh. xiii. 19, as the word of God which the man was violating, ignoring the real signification and spirit of the prohibition and of this instance, as they did in all their enactments, minute and vexatious, about the Fourth Commandment. They had perverted the beneficent aim of the day of rest, and made it a day of intolerable bondage. It was not unimportant that Jesus should break through their petty rules in order that the true Sabbath-keeping might be vindicated. The Fourth Commandment became the chief occasion of showing their outward zeal for God’s law. “If any one carries anything from a public place to a private house on the Sabbath . . . intentionally, he renders himself liable to the punishment of premature death and stoning” (quotation in Westcott). Lücke quotes as a general principle, “All care for life sets the Sabbath aside.” It is only too easy to raise some external thing into the place of the worship in spirit and truth which the Father seeks. We make idols of our churches, of our creeds, of our systems, of our Sabbaths, and Bibles possibly, whenever the love of God and of men for Christ’s sake is quenched by such zeal. The fire is strange.

11 f. The man sheltered himself under the direction of Jesus. If He had power to heal, He had also power to set aside such an observance. *That very man said to me*, etc. ; defiant, Meyer. The Jews asked who the fellow was that bade him take up his bed ; not who the man was that had healed him : more anxious to detect a transgression of their law than to congratulate this man on his restored health, or to give a welcome to his restorer.

13 walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I

13. *Wist not who it was.* Naturally, if this were only Christ's second appearance in the city. *Conveyed himself away*, peculiar word in Greek, occurring only here in New Testament, meaning lit. to move or avert the head. *A multitude*, etc., either the reason why Jesus quickly left the spot, or the reason why He was able to escape notice so easily. Jesus was much averse to the kind of faith that took rise in miracles.

14. *In the temple.* A good sign, Ps. lxvi. 13. *Sin no more*, etc. It is a reasonable inference that the man had sinned so as to entail this bodily weakness on him. Christ knew his life: made him feel that God had been speaking to him in its long painful affliction; and that perhaps he was not so impressed with his sin, or God's wonderful mercy, as he might; see also ix. 1 ff. The "worse thing" would be the irrevocable and eternal judgment of God, out of which no Saviour could set him free. For, to an old man, what could be worse than thirty-eight years of paralysis? It may be instructive to ask why no mention of his sin was made at the moment of healing, as in the analogous case, Matt. ix. 2. Perhaps the state of the man's mind is to be taken into account. He may have been so utterly despairing that no promise of pardon of sin could rouse him. Nothing but this merciful outward deliverance. Yet, at the same time, if this mercy quickened feeling and desire toward God again, there was the risk always attending such cases, that gratitude with no deeper root would fade. If therefore it was wise of Jesus not to speak of his sin at first, it was wise and loving now to remind the man that healing of the body without healing of the soul might be no mercy to him; that he might know where his danger lay, and seek the grace of God to avoid it. Life is not a series of disjointed events. The hand and will of God may be seen all through. 15 f. *The man departed*, etc.: expecting surely that the Jews (*i.e.* the representative Jews—members of the Sanhedrim) would joyfully recognise Jesus as a prophet at least. He could not have known their sinister intentions. Anxious to oblige them *perhaps*, and excuse himself at least. Observe, the Jews asked who bade him carry his bed; the man told them it was Jesus *who made him whole*. Omit, and sought to slay Him. The insertion was prompted by the words of the 18th verse, which show the kind and object of the persecution.

17. *He answered them.* Their hostility had been, somehow, publicly avowed, both in word and deed. *My Father worketh even until now, and I work.* This defence is remarkable. In the Synoptics, Christ's defence is on the ground that works of mercy are in perfect accordance with Sabbath law; that the Sabbath was made for man's benefit. Here we are taken back to the fact which is at the root of this law: God's resting from all His

18 work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth,

works on the seventh day. 1. What did this rest of God mean ? It was not a ceasing from doing men good : neither spiritually, sending them prophets and righteous men to win them to Himself ; nor temporally, sending them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. Not on the seventh day did this stream of mercies cease. Hence, Jesus in curing the impotent man on the Sabbath was only imitating God in His ceaseless kindness to all men. "In Him absolute activity and absolute rest are one," Olshausen. 2. And it was of small consequence to distort the Commandment compared with the distortion of the character of God. If the exercise of mercy must be suspended on the Sabbath that the law of the Sabbath might be kept, it followed that God must suspend the exercise of His goodness for the same reason. Jesus refutes this. The thought would be intolerable. "My Father is working even till now, and I am working." The holy, loving character of God was concerned in this. 3. And, besides, as the proper conception of Sabbath rest led to the true conception of the God who Himself rested, and ordained the rest for men, it was significant that Jesus said : "My Father!" (Comp. His first words at His first public appearance in Jerusalem, ii. 16, "My Father's house !") To give God such a name was the weightiest argument. How unlike this was to their thoughts of Him and of His service ! Because they had not the hearts of sons, they did not believe in the Fatherly heart of God ; God was a Lawgiver, a Master ; they were servants, not sons. And their worship was bondage. 4. Lastly, while putting them right as to God, His character and will, Jesus implies that He Himself works in the same spirit and to the same effect as God, who is His Father ; and therefore that it is only through Him and His work as the Son that they can attain to the true knowledge of the Father. Observe, Jesus does not say, "Our Father," nor "The Father," but "My Father" ("The Father works not without the Son, nor the Son without the Father," Bengel) ; involving a claim which the Jews perfectly well understood, and at once acted on.

18. The charge of *Sabbath-breaking* was insignificant compared with that of *blasphemy* which they now bring against Jesus, because He said that *God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God* ; cp. Rom. viii. 32, "His own Son," also i. 14 and 18, "Only - Begotten ;" see x. 33. They perceived that Jesus called God His Father in a special sense ; and they inferred that He assumed equality with Him, in nature and in work as well. They were right in that inference ; they were very far wrong in their estimate of the Spirit of Jesus, and of His motive in stating such a claim ; (note the tenses—"He was breaking ;" "He was calling").

(3.) *The Father and the Son, 19-30.* 19-23. *The Father and Son.* 24-30. *The Son and men.* — 19-23. *The Father and the Son.* 19. *Answered:* so ver. 17. Their feelings were somehow expressed in Christ's hearing. Jesus proceeds to unfold and explain all that was implied in the remarkable words just spoken. *The Son can do nothing of (or from) Himself,*

20 these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth : and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

etc. There is an inner impossibility of nature, and of will. Observe how, in calling Himself "the Son," He justifies His claim to peculiar relationship with the Father. 1. The Son's action is not self-derived ; therefore, is not self-willed, is not self-seeking. 2. The Son's action is inspired by the Father's, which is fully known to Him. 3. The Son's action is entirely coincident with that of the Father. It was as if Jesus had said : My ambition is not to be equal with God, not to be as God, like your first father Adam, as you suppose ; but to be not independent of Him, to represent Him truly to you. When they expected He would say, But I *am* equal in nature and work, He answers by professing inability to do anything without His Father. He could hardly have revealed the consciousness and fact of equality with God in a more convincing way. Had there been anxiety to assert equality, there would have been anxiety to express independence, springing from a sense of the want of it. See the Gospel throughout (see ver. 30, where He finishes this part of His argument as He began). The conceptions and feelings of these Jews were utterly at variance with this spirit of Jesus. They sought honour one from another, ver. 44. They could not understand one who did not care for human honour, one who cared not so much to be thought equal with God, as to be thought continually depending on His Father and His Father's will. Note the present tenses, "the Father doing," "the Father doeth ;" and the inference of separate personalities. Calvin misapprehends the argument, strange to say, in holding our Lord to refer here simply to His human manifestation as Redeemer. It surely is the eternal truth about the Son.

20. *For—marvel.* The reason why these facts are so. The first clause of this verse corresponds to the previous verse. The Son's action is based on the Father's ; the Son's attitude to the Father rests on the Father's attitude to Him. There is a threefoldness in the one agreeing with the threefoldness in the other — (1) The Father loveth the Son ; (2) and showeth Him all things ; (3) that Himself doeth. Observe how these three statements meet the three statements reciprocally of ver. 19—(1) The Son's action is not self-derived, because the Father loveth the Son. The ultimate fact in this relationship is love. This is the revelation of the very heart of the Godhead, *i.e.* the heart of the Father and of the Son (see on iii. 35). This is the eternal fountain of life. This is the foundation on which the whole universe reposeth, the love of the Father to the Son, whence flows all Divine love to ourselves,—words that tax theologians ; words that speak home to the hearts of children. All the material that theology has ever built up of that marvellous relation, struggling in its use of such terms as eternal generation, eternal Sonship, begotten not made, consubstantial, and the like, it may get, and has got, out of this quarry. A claim—this—greater than had Jesus said : "The Son is equal to the Father ;" for, where love like this reigns, Oneness is complete. A relation — this — more inexpressibly profound than had Jesus used (He might have used) words borrowed from schools of pious thought ; for who can measure the depth of the Father's love to the Son ? We are brought into a region of truth where intellectual definitions and intellectual comprehension are altogether subordinate to the state of our hearts and our own personal experiences : "for he that loveth not, knoweth not God ;

for God is love," i John iv. 8. (2) The Son's action is inspired by the Father, for the Father sheweth Him all things, etc. In these two simple words, *seeing*, ver. 19, and *showing*, we have presented to us those mysterious internal relations which exist between the Persons of the Trinity. What the Father does when He *shows* the Son all things that He doeth; how the Son *sees* all this; who can tell? Words borrowed from our common uses here, and transferred to that sacred sphere, can only partially reveal the eternal realities of it. We are assured here at least that the Son is fully the sharer of the Father's purposes; knows the decrees of God; holds no outside place; He is "the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father," i. 18; cp. xvi. 15, "All things that the Father hath are mine." Words are misleading if entire union and unity are not meant. The question whether Jesus speaks here of His present or post-incarnate state is needless. The relation implied with all its consequences is timeless. (3) The Son's action is coincident with the Father's. He does whatever the Father does, in like manner, ver. 19, and the Father sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth for this very end; see iii. 35, where the gift by the Father of all things to the Son rests on the love of the Father to the Son; see also xvii. 2, "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh," etc. As the Son knows all the Father knows, so He does all that the Father does. He shares the Father's Omniscience and Omnipotence. Observe the intensely personal element when we are taken into the innermost Godhead. Not abstractions, not metaphysics, but personal relations. Not either what Jesus *absolutely* is; always relatively to His Father. "Father," "Son," "love," "knowledge," "work," "seeing," "showing," "doing;" these are the terms by which Jesus opens out to us the mysteries of that eternal life in the Godhead. In that wondrous existence there is a continual giving and a continual receiving. There is *love*; there is *knowledge*; there is *work*. But there is love because there is One loving and another loved; knowledge, because there is One showing and another seeing; work, because there is One doing and another copying that doing. And Love, Divine, Everlasting, Infinite, the love of the Father to the Son, is the ever-springing fountain of the whole mystery of being, knowing, and doing. Sublime inconceivable heights of knowledge there must be *there*: works wonderful in their reach and range, their ceaselessness, their stillness, their power of subduing all things, even the refractory will of man: but nothing which does not spring out of love, and nothing therefore which is intelligible apart from love. The mystery of all the universe, and the key to unlock it, is here: "The Father loveth the Son." *Loveth*—the Greek word is different from that used in iii. 35 and x. 17, expressing personal affection and natural relation; plainly therefore suitable to the occasion when Jesus is dealing of the inner and deep relations of the Godhead. When the Baptist (or evangelist) in iii. 35 says, "The Father loveth the Son," it is in contrast with the treatment which the Son receives at the hands—in the thoughts of men; He is not by them esteemed, but at least by the Father He is esteemed; the Greek word there expressing not natural and personal love, but the admiration and esteem which one earns by merit from others. Compare the use of both these words in xxi. 15-17, xi. 3 and 5. While we cannot but see that Jesus rests this revelation of the Father on His own unique relation to Him as the Son, yet we may also hold that He is making a revelation here of the true life of Sonship for men,—which for all who receive Him is "union and communion with Him in grace and glory." *Greater works than these*, i.e. than restoring the impotent man to health: great and merciful as

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them* ;
 22 even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father

that was, involving, in fact, the knowledge and power just claimed, as communicated to Him by the Father. Life for the body must be inferior to life for the soul—life everlasting ; and this is Christ's claim, as we shall presently see. The one is the symbol of the other. To heal the impotent man in body was proof that He could heal him in soul. *Marvel*. “Ye” emphatic. To have the faculty of *wonder*, is to be receptive of impressions—good impressions, possibly. Faith is the child of wonder ; and it is no discredit to it to be so. Wonder also is in turn the child of faith. Where there is no sense of wonder there is no sense of awe, no reverence, no feeling of mystery, no depth of character. [“The origination of veneration is wonder and fear. . . . We wonder because we are ignorant, and we fear because we are weak. It is therefore natural that in former times, when men were more ignorant and more weak than they now are, they should likewise have been more given to veneration, more inclined to those habits of reverence which, if carried into belief, cause superstition,” etc., Buckle, ii. 171. Some traditional sayings of Christ are preserved ; see Westcott : “He that wonders shall reign, and he that reigns shall rest.” “Wonder at that which is before you.”] *Works*. John's characteristic term for the miracles of the Lord, see on ii. 11 : they are redemptive works, the pledge and earnest of the new creation. (See Trench *On the Miracles*, Introduction.) “In His own eyes they were not miracles” (Bengel). Of course it is not to His miracles, strictly so called, that Jesus here alludes ; it is to His entire mediatorial manifestation personally and by His Spirit.

21-23. *For as the Father*, etc. The two great works of God are the *gift of life* to men, and then the *judgment of men* for their use of that gift. And these Divine prerogatives Jesus claims. They are the “greater works” of which He has spoken. (1) The Son is giver of life to men, and shall be so seen. It is true that it is of raising the dead and giving life to them that Jesus speaks in ver. 21 when referring to His Father's power ; not apparently of the original gift of life to men in their physical birth. Hence the act is interpreted as being moral and spiritual—the raising of the *dead in sins* and giving them Divine life. I think, however, that we must take the conception in a more general sense, especially in the light of ver. 26 : “As the Father hath life in Himself,” etc., keeping in view the starting-point in the Lord's argument, namely, the raising of the impotent man thirty-eight years under disease. The Father can raise the *dead*, Jesus argues ; He can put life where life has ceased to be, where life is not ; for He commands the gift of life. This was recognised by all, Deut. xxxii. 39 ; 1 Sam. ii. 6. Even so, the Son gives life to whom He will ; He is the absolute Lord of life, and He is the Lord of life in the most absolute sense and in every sphere, and to the furthest consequences, see i. 4, 12 f. *Whom He will*. His will is supreme and sovereign in this matter. We do not detach this aspect of Christ's power from His love, nor love from this. It is not that He limits His selection, or that the selection is arbitrary. It is that life is the result of His will, wherever it is found. In what sense and how, He proceeds to show (ver. 24). There is also the will of man to be taken into account —i.e. the *grace* of this life-giving, ver. 24. (2) The Son has been ordained by the Father the judge of men, and shall be so seen. *For*

judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the
 23 Son : that all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour
 the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not
 24 the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto
 you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that
 sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into con-

neither doth the Father judge, etc. (See below on ver. 27.) Cp. iii. 18 f. and 35 f.; Matt. xi. 27. We might have expected : and as the Father judges, even so, etc. But the Father's part in the Divine work of judgment is to place it, with all its processes and issues, in the hands of the Son ; see Acts xvii. 31 ; 2 Cor. v. 10. The reason and result intended by the Father : *in order that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father, etc.* The honour which the Son receives from men is—(1) the express ordainment of the Father ; (2) the result of His works ; (3) equal to that of the Father ; (4) the only way by which men can testify to their honour of the Father ; because the Father is known mainly, truly, through the mission of the Son. *The Father who sent Him.* The Jews charged Jesus with assuming equality with God. Jesus answers that the Father has appointed Him an honour so identified with His own that there can be no worship of the Father, and no faith in the Father, which is not a worship of and a faith in the Son ; see xiv. 1, 6 ; Eph. i. 20 ff. ; Phil. ii. 10. Calvin : The name of God when separated from Christ is an empty figment.

24-30. Jesus and men. Jesus proceeds to show in what sense and how He is life-giver and judge of men. Ver. 24. The human side. Notice the thrice-repeated *Verily, verily* (vers. 19, 24, 25), marking the solemnity of His utterances—*what the life is, and how He gives it, and to whom.* *He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life.* It is by His word that Jesus gives life. He Himself is the Word of God, the Word of life, 1 John i. 1 ff. He means not simply His own articulate voice when on earth, but also the gospel that sets Him forth to sinful dying men as God's message and method of mercy to them : the Son of God incarnate, living, dying, rising, and giving them the Holy Spirit. Jesus, in respect of all this, is the voice of God, the Word of God—*i.e.* God speaking to men ; so Heb. i. 1. The Father is the Speaker ; the Son is the Word. With regard to this word two conditions are laid down that it may be the minister of life—(1) It must be heard, hence the responsibility resting on Christians of making known to all men the gospel ; (2) and the Father, who speaks through it, must be believed. Calvin : Faith hath its seat, not in the ears, but in the heart (see Rom. x. 17, Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God ; and cp. ver. 14 of same chapter). The expression is not “believe in or on,” but “believe” simply ; signifying the belief in the record God has given concerning His Son ; taking the word as a true and faithful word spoken to ourselves by the Father ; recognising the Son as sent by the Father for this very end to give us life ; see Rom. x. 8 ff., especially 1 John v. 9-11. “The Spirit of God maketh the hearing, but especially,” etc. The word of Christ is itself a revelation and proof of the sending of the Son by the Father, and he who receives it as such *has life eternal* ; see on iii. 15 ff. ; cp. this statement of the freeness of salvation with the sovereignty of Christ, ver. 21. *And does not come into judgment* ; see on iii. 18. This, then, is the life which Christ gives to whom He will ; life imperishable because in union through faith

25 damnation ; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they

with that of God the Father and God the Son ; a life that affords no material for judgment, for its condition is daily self-judgment at the cross of Christ. For the believer eternal life is *now*, and the judgment already concluded, Rom. viii. 33 f. *Has passed out of death into life* ; see 1 John iii. 14 : "We know," etc. Hence unbelief is *death* in its nature and its fruits, Rom. viii. 6 ; as faith is *life* in its nature and fruits ; both terms are to be taken in the same latitude—ethical, spiritual, eternal ; or rather the state in which the word of Christ finds men is one of death, or tending to death, and faith in Christ is the only gateway into life. On the significance of the word *death*, see iii. 16, 36. If union with the Son of God be life, and faith in Him as occasioned by the word setting Him forth as the Son sent by the Father be the means of our union with Him, then beyond there is death. Observe again how John speaks the language of *finality* here. Processes are ignored ; results alone are contemplated, because all issues are determined now by a man's attitude to the Son of God. Faith in Him rules all the future.

25. The Divine Side. Having stated the general principle that faith in Him, as presented in His word, brings life eternal, Jesus proceeds to assure them that this great gift of life He is presently to exercise and is actually exercising ; and that marvellous as the fact is, it shall be realized. *The time cometh, and now is* ; see iv. 23. The Jews must be made to feel their present solemn responsibility, as every hearer of the word still. *The dead shall hear*. The "dead" are those in the state of "death" spoken of in the previous verse—those who do not have the life of the Son of God in them by faith. The impossibility and the danger of carrying out a figurative expression in terms of doctrinal statement are here evident. How can the *dead hear*? Still the expression on the lips of Christ is immensely suggestive (cp. Eph. ii. 1, 5 ; Col. ii. 13) ; and with whatever caution, the obvious inference must be made clear that "he that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," 1 John v. 12. Besides, have we not here the other and Divine side of salvation ? On the one side (ver. 24), whosoever will, whosoever hears and believes, has life. But men are *dead* (ver. 25), and need the voice of Christ to waken them into ability to believe and live. On the one side, faith ; on the other, regeneration, as before in ch. iii. All are *dead* in this sense who are not in communion with Christ. To awaken and give life to the dead is the object of the gospel, iii. 14 ff. There are but the two realms—life and death. Life has an infinite variousness ; still a living man cannot be mistaken for a dead man. So death comes in infinite variousness, still it is death ; and the least painful process of dying is death. *Shall hear the voice of the Son of God*, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. His voice, speaking through the power of the Spirit in His word, awakens the ear. The Living One must speak, else the dead cannot live. Take this with the truth of the previous verse. To hear and to believe is to have life ; hence the hearer's responsibility ; it rests with him. But he is dead : the voice of the Son of God calling him must first awaken the power to hear and to believe, hence the hearer's inability, shutting him up to implore the Spirit of God. *They that hear shall live*. They that hear are those spoken of ver. 24 ; Matt. xiii. 9 ; Rev. ii. 7. Not all the dead ; not all who hear outwardly ; they only that hear and recognise the voice of the Son of God addressing

26 that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself,
27 so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath
given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is

themselves, and turn a willing ear and heart to Him. The word may be heard when the living voice of the Son of God may not be recognised. It was so with the men who first heard these great truths. There is, therefore, a resurrection, moral and spiritual, now accomplished in the soul by the power of the Son of God speaking in His word. It is needless to distinguish between the *word* and the *voice* of Christ. The idea is the same conveyed under two different figures: Speech addressed to convince living men; a call to awaken dead men.

26. The reason why Jesus can raise the morally and spiritually dead is that He is the Source of life. *For as the Father has life in Himself*—the life underived, absolute, self-existent; and hence the power of communicating this to all,—*so hath He given (gave, R.V.) to the Son to have life in Himself*. The Son by the Father's gift has the same fountain of eternal life in Himself. He is the only source whence men can obtain it (Ps. xxxvi. 9). He is so by the Father's appointment. The fact of an equal co-existence with the Father is implied, as well perhaps as the fact (in the simple expression “hath given”) of the Son's derivation of His Sonship by some mysterious internal action of Godhead. It is not *life*, however, which the Father has given to the Son; but *life in Himself*, *i.e.* to be an independent spring of life for those who have it not in themselves; hence it may be taken of the Son as subordinate to the Father for the work of redemption; see i. 4. Without the former relation, however, this would have been impossible. Men can have no eternal life but in Jesus Christ. He is the only way to the Father. The early Christians were fond of the simile: that the Father was the Spring, and the Son the Stream rising from it. “The boldest paradox uttered by Jesus. It is *given* to the Son to live of *Himself!*” Godet.

27. The power to give life has the corresponding power to do judgment on the life given, as above, ver. 21 f. Mark the constant dependence of the Son on the Father. Explanation of the words in ver. 19: “The Son can do nothing of Himself.” The “judgment” here spoken of must apparently be taken as the accompaniment of the spiritual resurrection of the dead, ver. 25. The two ideas are classed together. There is no gift of life, such as that of which Jesus has spoken, without an exercise of judgment. If the dead are delivered from death, death is judged. If the dead are under the power of death, it is because they are under the just judgment of God for sin: and that judgment is annihilated by Him who gives life—and life more abundantly. Life in Christ and self-judgment go together. No judgment, no life; see xvi. 8. We rise daily into newness of life. Also we die daily. In the case of every believer this twofold power of Christ is exercised—he is risen, he is judged; sin is judged for him, and is being daily judged in him. (Note the careful rendering in R.V. of Greek tenses: in ver. 22, “hath given”; vers. 26, 27, “He gave,”—the perfected act and the historical fact respectively.)

Because He is the Son of man, or a Son of man, or Son of man, i. 51. The phrase in Greek is different from that in every other passage where the name occurs, the article being omitted both before *Son* and before *man*, except Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14, where R.V. inverts the order of this passage, putting “a Son of man” into text; so in Dan. vii. 13. “Omission of article

28 the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

concentrates attention upon the nature and not upon the personality of Christ' (Westcott). The probability is, therefore, that a different sense is intended. The first and third of these significations are much the same in effect; and the R.V., putting the second into the margin, leaves it as dubious in the opinion of the scholarship of our day whether of the two is correct. On the whole there can be no doubt as to interpretation, that the humanity, and the *ideal* humanity, of our Lord is intended to be emphasized, as the reason why He has the power given Him to do judgment. That power belongs to the Son of God as of divine right, ver. 22. It is a divine prerogative. None but God could judge. But there is a special fitness in the exercise of it by one who shares human nature. Because He has life in *Himself*, He imparts it to men. Because He has judgment—the standard of judgment—in *Himself*, the *norm of human nature*, He has power to judge men. Not simply because Divine, holding a place outside men, does He judge; also because He is within men—a Son of man, and the Son of man; the one man by whom all other men must judge themselves and be judged. The human life of Jesus is the ideal, which, rising before us continually, judges our own. It shows us what we ought to be, and when we fall short of it we are self-judged. Jesus, then, as Son of man, has judgment in *Himself*. Being what He is, He judges. Cp. iii. 19. "This is the judgment, that light has come into the world," etc. The voice of the Son of God which calls and raises us into His own risen life, is at the same time the voice of the Son of man which speaks of love and purity, and awakens within us the voice of self-judgment. There is doubtless conveyed in the words the inference of a judgment that has sympathy, mercy, full understanding of man's condition in it. And therefore a judgment, the validity or impartiality of which no man can dispute. But the point is that Jesus has this power of judgment as of life in *Himself*, Dan. vii. 13 ff. (That Jesus meant merely "Messiah" by this expression, as Lüicke affirms, would not follow even if we grant that Dan. vii. formed the link of connection between the hearers and Himself; and the sense would be very tame; see on i. 51.)

28 f. *Marvel not at this.* The Jews likely showed incredulous and hostile surprise at the claims of Christ; a resurrection and a judgment now were truths, besides, scarcely within their comprehension. Jesus makes them as intelligible as could be, and His claims, when He adds plainly that the coming resurrection, with its final issues of weal and woe, in which the Jews (except the Sadducees) believed (Dan. xii.; Acts xxiii. 8), should be the act of His own power. To us the proof of a future bodily resurrection is the present spiritual resurrection in the faith of Christ: the life of the believing man. To the Jews it was rather the reverse. They believed in a coming resurrection of the dead; they believed in it as a divine prerogative, and as God's greatest act of power. Hence, in claiming it, Jesus claims all power. The change here from a present spiritual fact of a resurrection life, and a judgment from which they have escaped in the experience of believing men, to the future climax of the history of the world, is made apparent by the omission of the words used in ver. 25: *And now is.* Contrast the "all that are in the tombs" with "the dead" in ver. 25. The resurrection is universal in this case; partial in that. *His voice*; Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Thess. iv. 16. Not of necessity immediate, as cp. ver. 25. The voice of the Son of God, in His

29 and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the 30 resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing :

gospel, raises the spiritually dead. The instrumentality in this case appears to be the “the voice of the archangel,” “the trumpet of God.” *Shall come forth*, etc. ; how—in what guise—is not said ; but the very personalities intact, at least, that once lived on earth, and bearing on them the results, and going on to meet in other and new conditions the results of their earthly lives. *They that have done good . . . they that have done ill* ; see on iii. 20 f. They that have done good must be the same who, ver. 25, have heard the voice of the Son of God ; the same who, ver. 24, have heard His word, and believed the Father who sent Him ; for all who have had the word of Christ set before them at least. Mark the connection between the faith and life in Christ and goodness ; cp. Matt. xxv. 34 ff. Mark also that where the reference is to the general resurrection, beyond therefore the limits of Judaism, the ethical conception of goodness, the standard being conscience, comes into view. Judgment is according to our works ; works are the outcome of life ; see vi. 29. The spiritually risen have nothing to fear from death and the judgment to come. To *do* good, a man must *be* good ; and goodness comes from Him who alone is good, through our sharing His nature, iii. 3. See Dan. xii. 2 on the twofoldness of the resurrection. Whether there be *two* acts or only *one* in this great drama is not said. Matt. xxv. 31 f. would imply only one ; Rev. xx. 5, 6 (probably Acts xxiv. 15), seems to imply two. The point does not come up here. It is the carrying forward through the tomb into the existence beyond of the direct issues of this present existence. Life in Christ has the hope and promise of an eternity of blessedness in it. The death of this present body is a mere incident to the believer. His present risen life in Christ is the pledge of a resurrection out of the grave unto a life free from sin and pain for ever ; see vi. 44. *Life* and *judgment* are the respective features of the two resurrections. Judgment here passing into its deeper ominous shade of the result, namely, *condemnation*. Freedom from judgment, then, is determined by faith here that raises us into the life of the Son of God. For all besides, resurrection from the grave is their entrance on the just unmitigated retribution of God. Whether this “resurrection of judgment” be final or not, see on iii. 36. Observe that there is no act of *judging* between the resurrection and the issues ; according to John’s doctrine, that the process is now going on, and this great future adjustment of men’s lives rests entirely on the work of Christ’s word now. Christ will perform and accomplish what He is now carrying forward in His kingdom on earth, xii. 48.

30. Jesus returns to the point from which He started in this argument. He was charged with making Himself equal with God. He announced that His first aim was to live in complete dependence on His Father : through that dependence the Father shared with Him all that belonged to Himself, especially the works of life-giving and judgment, in His exercise of which toward men they were required to honour Him as they honoured the Father God. Jesus then explained how He exercises life-giving and judgment on men, asserting that their eternal destinies depended on their relation to Himself. Fitly, therefore, He returns to the truth from which He set out, as if it had been lost sight of in the course of the argument. *I cannot from (or of) myself do anything.* The pronoun emphatic (the personal pronoun

as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek continues to the end of chapter from here), as if to remind them that after all He had said of the Divine power that was His, the dependence on His Father was the truth that came nearest His own consciousness. He disclaims independent action. The moral impossibility is the highest, always subject in this region to the inner relations of Son to Father in the Godhead. He could not be the Son and act of Himself. *As I hear I judge.* Calvin here again denies that Jesus speaks as to His "pure Divinity," see viii. 40. His attitude to the Father is that of "listening regard," ver. 20. His judgment is therefore the faithful reflection of the Father's mind, no arbitrary procedure or impulse. Note the present tenses. To what judgment does He refer? Probably generally to all the power of judgment that flows from Him, Person and work, the process and result, here and hereafter, "His whole administration" (Calvin). *My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek my own will, but, etc.*, iv. 34, vi. 38. Self-renunciation is the quality of righteousness, the ethical principle involved in the *hearing* of the Father by the Son, which is not a mere slavish copy. Self-renunciation and self-devotion to the Father attend it. A mighty principle, applying to Christ's life as well as to His judgment. Self-interest does not warp His judgment as so often it does our own. It is astonishing to hear Christ speaking so after claiming the omnipotence of God. Even for Him the surrender of His own will was the condition on which His work as righteous was established. Even for Him that highest moral attitude for men, submission to God's will and giving up self-will to do that, was not indispensable. It is unnecessary to ask whether He speaks as Divine or as God-man. The truth is eternal. From beginning to end as Son His aim is the Father's will. It has been ever so. His Sonship has no other significance ; no other at least that goes deeper down, as He explains it, ver. 20. His mission is not *self-originated*, ver. 19 ; not *self-sustained*, vers. 19 and 26 ; not *self-directed*, ver. 30. At a long interval this truth may apply to us.

(In an admirable note on this great passage, Lücke attempts to show that Jesus had distinctly in His view the beliefs of the Jews about the resurrection and judgment, and the Messiah's relation to these works, in order that He might lead them by means of what they knew, or thought they knew, to the truth as He declared it. I give the substance of this note. The Jews believed that when their Messiah came He should fulfil all God's promises of redemption, and pardon, and inheritance of the earth for Israel. The Messiah should also call the *holy dead of Israel* from their graves that they might enjoy the blessings of the new kingdom of God. Along with this act there would of necessity go some work of judgment (which was not quite apparent in regard to limit or scope), for they were not all Israel that were of Israel ; anyhow, the good should be sifted from among the bad. The kingdom established by the Messiah being meant to conquer the world, it should have the power of drawing to itself all that was worthy beyond covenant lines. Its duration should be a thousand years, more or less. At the close of this time of blessing and enlargement for Israel should happen the end of the world, with the general resurrection and judgment of mankind. These great works were originally ascribed directly to God, a work of omnipotence and an act of righteousness. But when the Jews laid hold of the conception of the Messiah as the Mediator of the works of God in the world, they came naturally to ascribe to Him also this second

not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent
31 me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know
33 that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent
34 unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive
not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might

resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment. On these beliefs Jesus founded His solemn utterances, Matt. xxiv. 30 f., xxv. 31 ff.; cp. Luke xiv. 14, and Rev. xx. 11 ff. We need add only this, that it is not quite so clearly made out as the foregoing note would lead us to conclude, what the specific belief of the Jews of our Lord's day was about these subjects. But the general bearing of such belief in the doctrines touched here and elsewhere in the New Testament is of considerable importance.)

(4.) 31-47. Christ's personal testimony. 31-39. The nature of this witness to Him. 40-47. The rejection of it by the Jews, and the reason.

31. *If I bear witness*, etc. Pronoun emphatic. Suppose here that the Jews object: We have only your own word for all this; we need some independent proof, cp. viii. 14. Remember the requisite of the Jewish law, to have two or three independent witnesses. To ask proof in this case was to confess incapacity to receive the plainest proof. Remember, too, that the miracle was set aside. "Witness," to what? see ver. 36, that He was "come from the Father," that at least. Believing this, more would follow for a sincere mind. Jesus could no more bear witness of Himself than He could do anything of Himself, vers. 19 and 30. He disclaims independence in all He does and says. His works and His words are the reflection of the Father's works and words. He is therefore never single in His witness concerning Himself. *Is not true*. A strong statement, showing as in previous verses the inherent impossibility of the Son acting in any way separately from the Father. But just for this very reason, paradox though it may seem, He can say also, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is true," viii. 14. The general principle Jesus here lays down may apply to ourselves. Our words should say less than our lives in self-defence. On the term and idea of *witness*, see i. 7.

32. *Another*, i.e. the Father, ver. 37. Carefully mark these expressions as bearing on the unity yet separateness in the Godhead. *I know*, etc., the deepest knowledge which is intuitive, its simplicity weighty (Meyer).

33. *Ye have sent to John*. In case they might think He was meaning the Baptist. *Ye*, accentuated, as opposite to *I*, ver. 34; see i. 19. *And he has borne witness to the truth*: note the perfected act, see i. 7, 19, iii. 27 ff., x. 41. To the *truth*: for Jesus wished no evidence in His favour that was not in strict conformity with *truth*. We might say, truth was dearer to Him than Himself; but then He was Himself *the truth*. (We are not, however, to interpret "the truth" here as meaning Jesus *personally*, rather than Jesus is the Christ.) Both the Baptist and Christ were witnesses to the truth, like every servant of God. No one witnesses to Christ who does not witness to the truth, and conversely. Well, if we are concerned for the truth more than for self-interest. For the same phrase, xviii. 37; 3 John 3.

34. *But I* [pronoun emphatic again] *not from man the witness receive* (ver. 41). That is, the witness of which He is speaking, and which He receives, is not borne to Him by man; anything man can say is from Christ

35 be saved. He was a burning and a shining light : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Himself, for He is the Light that lighteth every man ; lighteth also the Baptist. The less cannot prove the greater. John and all the prophets must be themselves tested by the one standard of truth, by Him who says, I am the Truth ; they bear witness to Him indeed, for “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Yet that is intelligible only in the light that streams back on it from Christ. To Jesus Christ we must bring every man’s measure of truth to judge it. *These things, however, I say that ye may be saved.* Jesus needed no human testimony, whoever received Him received Him on the recommendation of God, iii. 33 ; but if anything the Baptist said might help them to faith in Himself, He was willing to be judged by that. He had but one desire—their salvation. For their sakes, therefore, if not on His own account, let John’s witness be heard. The Baptist showed how greatly men needed Christ. Christ alone can show the need, and *satisfy the need as well*, xvi. 8.

35. *He was the lamp that burneth and shineth.* The verb seems to convey that he was now dead. The definite reference is based on the Old Testament predictions (Isa. lxii. 1). Jesus is Himself the *Sun* whence the lamp receives its radiance. Jesus was certainly not despising the Baptist’s testimony, not despising even any lesser *human* witness ; see iv. 39 ff. Such has its place, as He here recognises. But He speaks here of what is to be taken as the conclusive witness to which universal, final appeal may ever be made, which is Christ Himself, *promised and come.* The Baptist’s testimony was of Divine appointment ; it was needful ; it was helpful ; it was the clearest, as it was the last, of the prophetic witnessing to Jesus. “There hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist,” Matt. xi. 11. There is not only the clearness with which he pointed to Jesus ; that might well be as he stood so near to Him ; there was besides the spirit of entire self-renunciation, that moral fitness in the Baptist by which he accepted his own lowlier place, and acquiesced in the quenching of his own light in the rising of the Sun ; see iii. 27 ff. The humility of the Master was the humility of the servant. It was a surprise to these Jews that John was content with saying, “I am a voice ; there cometh one after me mightier than I.” Had they sympathized with that spirit of self-abasement, they would have been readier than they were to receive and understand Jesus when He came, especially when He said, “I can of myself do nothing.” *And ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light.* The interest which these Jews had in the Baptist and his work at first, as seeming to hold out hope of something Messianic, died away when they found (1) that he was not the Messiah himself, and did not profess to be ; (2) that he required of them repentance and fruits consistent therewith, and ridiculed their pretensions to be the children of the kingdom because of their outward descent from Abraham. Mark the exactness of Christ’s words, “Ye were willing to rejoice, etc. ; but ye were not willing to weep for your sins”—a temporary excitement—a *sensation* ; and (3) that he pointed his disciples and others to Jesus as one greater than himself, and that Jesus was already depriving him of his popularity. John was not the man they took him for, his work not what they expected and hoped it to be. Still, as he made no personal claim, like Jesus, on them, their sentiment toward him was not hostility, it was respect, as for an earnest, well meaning

36 But I have greater witness than *that* of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time,

man, who, however, did not suit their views. Had they believed the Baptist, they would have believed Jesus.

36 f. *But I have*, etc., pronoun emphatic. The testimony which Jesus receives and possesses is that of His Father. And it follows from the nature of the case, from the truths which He has just stated, viz. that He could do nothing of Himself ; that all the Father does He Himself does ; that this testimony is borne through Jesus Himself ; cp. viii. 16-18. The Father bears witness to the Son—(1) in Christ's own manifestation indirectly ; (2) in the Father's own word directly. (1) Indirectly in the *works* which He has given the Son to accomplish, and which the Son does. By *works* (see on ver. 20) He means *His whole manifestation as Mediator*, consummated on the cross, where He cried, “It is finished !” (xvii. 4, I have accomplished the work which Thou hast given me to do ; iv. 34). No doubt in this Gospel this term “*works*” is frequently limited to the miracles wrought by Jesus. So apparently x. 25, 32, 38, xiv. 11, xv. 24. But are there not in this verse indicated both the general and the special view?—*general*, “the works which the Father,” etc. ; *special*, “the very works which I am doing”—just such as these which I am doing before your eyes. The whole appearance of Christ on earth, all He was and all He did—His words, works, character, life, and death—witness that the Father has sent Him : that He has come from a Father with a message of love to men ; with the purpose of making lost children know the Father, and winning them back to that Father's heart ; of making them sons of God in reality,—this is the highest Christian evidence, Christ's own revelation of the Father. Such was the utterance of even the single work of mercy just performed on the impotent man : it was the act of one sent by the Father, x. 25, xiv. 11,—as if to meet an objection drawn from this work of healing on the Sabbath. (2) The Father also bears witness to the Son *through His own word* directly. Of that word Jesus says two things, that it is not *abiding* in them ; and that it is contained in the *O. T. Scriptures*. Do not think—He says—of a voice sounding from heaven, or of a vision, such as Moses heard and saw. The witness of the Father is nearer you, and more convincing ; cp. viii. 19.

a. The word of the Father testifying to the Son is heard in *conscience*, ver. 38. It is the witness borne to an ideal of truth and goodness, by which the individual character is always tried. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. And it is the word of the Father—as it leads men to feel instinctively their dependence, as children, on some One able to help them ; makes them feel their need of a Father, cp. vi. 44, 45, 46. In this sense such expressions are found in this Gospel: “to be of the truth ;” “to be of God ;” “to hear and learn of the Father.” Men have lost much of their intuitive power of presenting God's will and word to themselves ; yet so much remains as to make them able to feel the correspondence of the gospel with their deepest need. A man true to conscience has the word of the Father abiding in him. These Jews were not true to conscience ; they would rather put Jesus to death for breaking the Sabbath than praise God for His mercy

38 nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he has sent, him ye believe not.

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will

to the impotent man. Had they been listening sincerely to God's voice in conscience speaking of goodness, and purity, and love, they would have recognised in Jesus the same voice; they would have recognised that He was sent by the Father; they would at least, as Jesus says, have *believed Him* (if not yet *believed on Him*). This profound idea is a favourite one with John: abiding in one; in truth; in love; the word abiding in one, *i. John i. 10, ii. 14*, etc. But the word of the Father did not "abide in them."

b. The word of the Father testifying to the Son was heard in the *O. T. Scriptures*, ver. 39. Read, probably, indicative, *Ye search the Scriptures*, as R.V. in *text* (what they are doing now being more in point than what they would do on conditions)—*the writings* or "Scriptures," as with us—"the Bible" = the Book; so "the Word of God" = the Eternal Son Jesus Christ personally. Their conception of the Scriptures was right, that they had eternal life in them, *i.e.* the Messianic blessedness, had they only rightly used them as a guide to life eternal, what it was, and how to be obtained. But their notion of eternal life was this, that by keeping the Scriptures in their own strength and merit they should attain to it; (cp. "Good Master, what good thing shall I do?" etc.), quoting *Ps. i. 2*, etc.: "He who acquires for himself the words of the law, acquires for himself life eternal" (Rabbinic). They searched laboriously among the letters of the Old Testament: magnifying the outward, neglecting and ignoring the spirit of it. They raised a temple to the fingerpost, and carefully avoided following the road it indicated. Christ's conception of the *O. T. Scriptures* is significant, *they testify of me*, ver. 46. ("The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," *Rev. xix. 10*.) They are His Father's words. How do they testify? Not by mere verbal allusions and predictions, but in their great scope: as they tell of the need of a Saviour from sin and death, and proclaim the fact of a Saviour coming to save—the end of all the law and the prophets. Jesus Christ is the *Figure* of the Old Testament. He breathes life into its parts, otherwise dead and dispirited. Arms are stretched out, hands are uplifted towards the rising Sun. Apart from Christ, the Old Testament is an unsolved riddle. The voice of God in His word must always appeal to the same voice in conscience. There is the word of the Father speaking in man's conscience, where witness is borne to perfect truth and goodness; and the recognition of the word within will lead to its recognition without, where perfect truth and goodness are embodied in Christ. Neither in conscience nor in Scripture did these Jews hear the word of the Father testifying to the Son. Not in conscience, as we have seen; not in the Scripture, for though they saw therein a Messiah promised, they failed to see the kind of Messiah that was promised; and they failed to see the reason why such a Messiah was required, they failed in the true understanding of the Scripture. The Scripture testified of Christ because it showed men's need of Christ to save from sin; but this was not the chief desire of these Jews. Nor to know of One who would reconcile them to their consciences because reconciling them to God, but to know of a merely temporal deliverer, was their hope. *Ye will not come*

41 not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not 42 honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the 43 love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and *to me that ye may have life*, ver. 40. Observe how deep the name of Father as applied to God goes in this argument. It was not the voice of a Father calling to them as wandering sons, inviting them back,—either in conscience, where the sense of being orphans might have been felt; or in Scripture, where the facts of sin and need of redemption were revealed. Had they known the word as that of a father, they would have known something of His mind; and so recognised the full exposition of that mind in the Son, and been in sympathy with it. What a disclosure of the darkness in man! They had God's word in their hands, yet it shed no light into their hearts. They idolized the Scripture as they idolized the Sabbath; and did not find rest in this, did not find eternal life in that. Mark how Jesus identifies eternal life with Himself. "Life eternal was in the Son, because they testify of *me*: and *ye will not come to me*." The two great evidences for Christ's truth and truthfulness are the totality of Christ's own revelation of the Father, and the Father's word speaking to us either through conscience, our original constitution, or through His revealed word.

40-47. Rejection by the Jews of Christ and the witness for Christ, with its reason. *Ye will not come to me*, etc. The pathos is great; Jesus recognises the freedom of the human will, and its power to resist the drawing of the Father and the striving of the Spirit. After all that Father and Son have done—after all the witness borne, after all the yearning desire of the Saviour that men may be saved—the will of man bars the way. Jesus states it here as if it were an ultimate fact, beyond which even He does not see. One thing is plain, it is not for want of proof that they will not believe, but for want of desire and will. Life is obtained by "coming" to Jesus Christ.

41. *Glory from men I do not receive*, going back to ver. 23. Perhaps, as before, an interruption,—expression of their contemptuous disbelief in Him as giving life; an insinuation that He only wished to arrogate glory from them, wished to make Himself a great man, and not receiving it indulges in bitterness at them. To which Jesus answers that He does not desire and would not take the glory—if it were such—that has its rise and reason in human will or inclination, viii. 54. Not glory from men, but *men themselves*; Jesus sought to save them from themselves and love of false glory, vi. 15; see also viii. 50. He prays His Father to *glorify* Him with the *glory* which He had with Him before the world was, xvii. 2 ff. The glory He seeks from men is that of being received as their Saviour, that of having this offer of salvation and life eternal accepted.

42 f. *But I know you*, etc. (I have *studied* you). But you are different from me,—a sudden startling disclosure of the men to themselves, the men who were questioning Him as to His credentials. Jesus knew them, and knew that they had not the *love of God in them*. (Westcott reminds us that this expression is found only here and Luke xi. 42 in the Gospels). They professed it much. It was not *in themselves*. What an awful judgment on men uttered by lips impartial and yet loving! Here was one reason why they would not come to Himself: they did not care to hear of a God of love, of a Father who had sent His Son to save them; they did not feel their need of a God to love and be loved by. It was another *love* they had *in themselves*, as we shall see. Hence their rejection of Him who came not in His own

ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name,
 44 him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive
 honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh*
 45 from God only ? Do not think that I will accuse you to the
 Father : there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom

name (Ps. cxviii. 26 ; Matt. xxi. 9, xxiii. 39 ; ch. xii. 13), but in the name of His Father, in the spirit of absolute self-surrender, giving up His own will, seeking nothing but glory for God ; to offer a Father's love, life of Sonship, the Father's nature, the Father's eternal home. These were things that belonged to a region in which they did not move, with which their carnal hearts had no sympathy. *If another shall come in his own name*, etc., vii. 18. They did not understand how one should be so solicitous for the glory of the Father and their own salvation, one who could do nothing of Himself ; who did not seek their admiration, did not care to have it ; they did not care to understand how God was a Father, and sought from them the love and reverence of sons. But should one come moving on their own low plane of sentiment and action, appeal to their base instincts and hopes, flatter them, tell them they were the favoured people, be not too particular in his own methods and aims, build his future out of their devotion, make himself a great man by their help, promise them the kind of good they sought, they should understand and welcome him. How their own history and that of the world confirm this great and searching principle needs not to be said ; see Matt. xxiv. 24. Bengel says, sixty-four false Christs have arisen since our Lord. "No one," says Calvin, "prefers falsehood to truth, unless by some perverse passion." "Where true love of God and of the word of truth fails, man becomes the spirit of self-seeking and a lie," Lücke.

44. The *unwillingness*, ver. 40, culminates in positive *inability*. *How can ye believe—glory from one another receiving, and the glory from the only God ye do not seek?* They were in this the direct contrary to Him, ver. 41. The ground of their unbelief was moral. It was not the difficulty of believing the great truths which Jesus had made known that kept them from Him. They could not plead that they did not understand such, as how the Son could be equal to the Father, and the like. Jesus says, Had you love to God, had you desire for His glory, to know Him as He truly is and to serve Him, you would believe. Self-love quenched the love of God in them. Whatever fed their self-love and self-importance they welcomed. They loved, Jesus said otherwise, greetings in the markets, and to be called of men *Rabbi* ! and the uppermost rooms at feasts. Desire for mutual admiration, springing from self-love, prevented them from believing in the Son, who could do nothing but what He saw the Father do ; who sought not His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. Unbelief is seldom pure, simple, on grounds of reason. Pride, vainglory, earthly desires and affections, turn the heart from God. Men will not because they love not ; and they love not because they love themselves more. This is the perpetual history and logic of unbelief. The ethical is always bound up with the spiritual. *The only God*, the only source, too, of glory, cp. xvii. 3. They were worshippers of idols, self was their god. So that they not only had *no love to God* ; they actually worshipped an idol, yet hoped in Moses !

45 ff. *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father*, etc. Were they saying it, or thinking it ? Why this sudden utterance ? They were posing

46 ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

CHAP. VI. 1. After these things Jesus went over the sea of

as the defenders of the Mosaic law, vv. 10-16; see ix. 28 f. They had Moses at any rate on their side, whatever He, Jesus, might say. How little valid their hopes were Christ shows! At least by introducing this thought Jesus cuts away all ground from beneath their feet. They think and say: We are resting anyhow on Moses. *You* are condemning us; *he* will acquit us. Christ is Judge, ver. 22, not Accuser. But there is here no question of time. (R.V. reads correctly—"have set your hope" instead of "trust.") Jesus says that true belief of Moses would lead to belief of Himself; true belief of Moses' writings to belief of His words; without Christ Moses would not have been. All the laws, ordinances, ceremonies, and the like were pointing to the need of Christ, or pointing to Him in type and shadow as the Fulfilment. By the *writings* of Moses concerning Himself He meant probably the whole spirit of the law as against human pride and self-complacency. Commandments, warnings, threats, promises; not simply such direct prophecy as Deut. xviii., and patriarchal promises. These fundamental laws answering to our human nature, if these were not believed, how could Christ's gospel of love and grace be believed, which *rested on them*? They gloried in Moses and his writings; but they did not give obedience to the God of whom Moses and his writings spoke; just as in ch. viii. Jesus denies they can be Abraham's children, as they do not Abraham's works. They gloried in the law; but the sum and substance of the law was to love God with all the heart; and that love, ver. 42, was not in them; cp. vii. 19, "Did not Moses give you the law?" etc. All who believe Christ's words of peace have beneath belief in Moses' words of terror. Moses ever accuses us of sin—threatens death; and our consciences echo the accusation. We shall be our own accusers, if Christ is set aside. Rejection of Christ is rejection of truth and light everywhere; while, as Jesus here implies, acceptance of truth and light anywhere—in any measure—leads to the acceptance of Himself. He claims to be in living harmony with all truth, first and last; for He is the Alpha and Omega of God's purpose for men.

Between ch. v. and vi. we must remember that the greater portion of Christ's ministry in Galilee as given by the Synoptists has taken place; a fact which throws light on this last and most definite offer of Himself to the Galileans. Thus in ch. v. we have a specimen of Jesus' work in Jerusalem; in ch. vi. a specimen of it in Galilee.

7. *Jesus feeds 5000 men in Galilee—Proclaims Himself the Bread of Life in relation to men—Is rejected by the Galileans, ch. vi.*

CH. VI. The chapter may be divided so—(1) 1-15. The miraculous feeding of 5000 men, and the immediate consequences of this miracle. (2) 16-21. Christ walks on the water. (3) 22-25. He is followed by the multitude. (4) 26-59. Jesus exposes their earthly motives in seeking Him, and exhorts them to seek the bread of life, which He explains to be Himself. (5) 60-66. Many professed followers are offended and leave. (6) 67-71. He asks the twelve if they too will go, and Simon answers for all; when the Lord replies that even one of them is a traitor.

(1.) 1-15. The Miracle. Ver. 1 f. *After these things; see on v. 1. The other*

2 Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, 4 and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast 5 of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

side, etc., to the eastern shore. *Whence*, is not stated, but probably Capernaum, vers. 17 and 24, ii. 12, His headquarters in Galilee. *Sea of Tiberias*: classic name for the Lake of Galilee or Sea of Gennesaret; so called from Tiberias, Herod's capital, on the western shore, about the middle. The town was built by Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, and named after the emperor, Tiberius Cæsar. According to Josephus, it became a flourishing centre of industry, to which the fact that it gave a new name to the lake in course of time testifies. It is interesting as bearing on the earlier date of the Synoptics and later date of this Gospel, that the name nowhere occurs in the former; see xxi. 1. The time of this incident is fixed, according to Matthew, by the death of the Baptist, xiv. 13; and Mark substantially agrees, though connecting the departure more with the need of repose for the twelve after their first mission, vi. 30 f. So Luke ix. 10. 2. Curiosity, and wonder, and carnal expectancy drew the crowds; not faith. *Signs* (instead of "miracles"), R.V.; see on ii. 11. This seems to contradict Christ's words in ver. 26, "Ye seek me not because ye saw signs," etc. But our Lord was clearly using the term in its stricter, deepest sense, while the evangelist is here using it as a general term for miracle or wonder; see ii. 23.

3 f. *The mountain*. R.V., the range by the lake, perhaps understood from the Synoptists. *There He sat*: the picture lived in John's eye. *The Passover, the feast of the Jews*: the definite article singling this feast out as the chief of the Jewish religious festivals. Connect also the mention of the fact with the following discourse on the necessity of eating Christ's flesh and drinking Christ's blood.

5 f. *Lifting up His eyes*. Another graphic touch, only the phrase is a Hebrew one; Gen. xviii. 2, xxii. 4, 13, xxiv. 63 f., etc. *Seeing that a great crowd*, etc. According to the Synoptists, Christ's proposal to feed them was made only at the close of the day, after He had spoken to them of the kingdom of God, and healed their sick. John's object in repeating the incident narrated by the others evidently was to show how it became the occasion of the memorable discourse, which had not been preserved by those; and, along with this, after his usual manner, to bring out a trait of individual character in the special discipline which Jesus was pleased to make of the miracle to the faith of Philip. Again, according to the Synoptists, the proposal of Christ, that the multitude be fed, followed that of the disciples, that they should be sent away. Here our Lord appears to take the initiative by the question to Philip. Westcott suggests that Jesus put this question early in the day, when first He saw the multitude flocking out to Him, and that later in the day Andrew came and reported what was to be had; but that John has brought the two together into a single scene. Not a very probable solution. The matter is insignificant, and, were we in possession of all the incidents, would be easily disposed of.

Christ takes men into the arms of His pity and sympathy. Heb. iv. 15,

6 And this he said to prove him : for he himself knew what he
 7 would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of
 bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may
 8 take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's
 9 brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five
 10 barley loaves, and two small fishes : but what are they among
 11 so many ? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now
 there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in
 number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves ;

“We have not an High Priest,” etc. The fact of our Lord's divine nature should not blind us to the possession by His humanity of all that we are accustomed to regard as its highest graces ; those, e.g., which are cherished and drawn out by difficulties ; those, too, which are born of large-heartedness, generosity, enthusiasm. The miracles of Jesus, like the whole of His salvation, are drawn out of His heart's blood. The question was put to Philip, doubtless, as being a man of slower apprehension—cautious and hesitating ; see on i. 43 f. and following note. Not to get the advice of Philip ; Jesus is never presented in the Gospels in such an attitude. He ever gives, and receives nothing. *To prove him* : tempting him, putting him to the trial. The word is in itself harmless, though the too frequent result of human trial or temptation throws back a sinister meaning on the word not inherent in it, which accordingly became its secondary sense (see Jas. i. 13, “God tempteth no man”), to *tempt* meaning to seduce to sin. The whole course of the Christian life is a temptation, or trial, or probation, under the direct control of the Holy Spirit, Gen. xxii. 1, also Job. Remark also how Jesus observes the special characteristic of each disciple, and lovingly subjects each to the discipline best suited to him, x. 14 f., xv. 2. Philip, looking more at the limited horizon of earth and its possibilities, and less at the limitless horizon of God's power and grace, needed and would be the better for this trial. *Himself knew what He would do.* The omniscient mind of Jesus is a favourite thought of John's ; cp. vers. 61, 64, xiii. 3, xviii. 4, xix. 28.

7. Jesus asked, *whence* ? Philip answered as if the question had been *how much* ? betraying at once the earth-bound thought. *Two hundred pennyworth*, i.e. 200 denarii (a coin = 8½d.), hence about £6 or £7. Not *how much*, however, is the measure of our store, but *whence* we look for it and receive it. If from *above*, we are possessed with the infinite fulness and possibilities of God. We walk by faith, not by sight ; man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. This thought should calm daily care and fear.

8 f. On Andrew's designation and ready character, see i. 40 f. and following note. *A lad*, lit. a little lad, or *laddie*. *Barley loaves*, or bran bread, the food of the poorer classes. *Two fishes* : the word again only in xxi. 9, 10, 13. Not of the fish as caught in the sea, but as somehow prepared for eating, or lately cured. The five barley scones and two little fishes were the lad's luncheon, carried, no doubt, in the scrip or basket slung over the shoulder, see ver. 13, the invariable companion of the Jews of the lower class.

10-13. The *men* alone were in number five thousand. *Make the men* [people] *sit down*. The disciples had done it in fear. *Jesus therefore took the*

and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down ; and likewise 12 of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, 13 that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had 14 eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again 16 into a mountain himself alone. And when even was *now* 17 come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum : and it 18 was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the

loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to them that were set down. (R.V. omits the clause, “to the disciples, and the disciples to,” evidently introduced from the earlier narratives.) (1) Jesus works only on the material furnished to Him by the disciples, (2) who must do their utmost ; (3) He gives God thanks for the slender repast, as if it had been sufficient for the whole ; and who knows how much lay in this act ? see ver. 23. It deeply impressed the beholders ; (4) He gives out with no ostentation, *as if always* from the slender stock before Him, multiplying this by the secret of His power. A singular mark of divineness ; no marvel being displayed, as in a gigantic heap of loaves, or the like ; (5) thus linking the supply closely to His own person, (6) and impressing on the disciples the need of careful economy, even in the presence of such a supply, wrought with no trouble, apparently to be relied on to-morrow as to-day.¹ *Baskets* : one for each apostle, made of stout wickerwork (see above, ver. 9). The Greek word is our English *coffin*. Note the exactness, *broken pieces from the five barley loaves*. No more were seen by human eye. Memento and proof of the miracle.

14 f. *Consequences of the miracle.* *The prophet*, etc. ; see on i. 21. *That cometh into the world* : John’s frequent periphrasis. Jesus gauged the popular impulse, not altogether bad ; see ii. 23-25. *Take Him by force*, i.e. to Jerusalem. What might have deceived other men could not deceive Him. Besides, such political kingship He had not come to establish. His kingship over men is based on the conviction of truth, xviii. 37. The self-restraint of Jesus is to be noted ; this temptation He had already met and conquered in the wilderness, Matt. iv. 3.

(2.) *Jesus walks on the water*, 16-21, Matt. xiv. 22-30 ; Mark vi. 45-56. Possibly to avoid all appearance of conniving at such a movement as the multitude wished, Jesus constrained His disciples to recross the lake to Capernaum, Matt. xiv. 22. The Jews had two evenings—the first from three to six afternoon, and the second later. The latter is probably meant

¹ A subordinate but important lesson was the need for sharing even our slender means with those who have none at all.

19 sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: 20 and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be 21 not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

22 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* 23 his disciples were gone away alone; (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did 24 eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks;) when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, 25 seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest 26 thou hither? Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily, I

here. 17. *Had not yet come to them.* He was expected. 19. *Stadion* = 600 feet, something rather less than a furlong. 21. *They were willing, therefore, etc.* The panic, on first catching sight of His form, is still reflected in these words. *Straightway:* the impression is of a miraculous act, but not necessarily so; see Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 51 ff.

There are general principles conveyed by these two miracles, such as have been already alluded to in connection with the miracle at Cana, which is of the same kind as these. In Christ's presence, want and suffering and impossibilities cease. He can support men, though means run short. He can give joy in sorrow, and strength to the weak. Little with Him answers the purpose of great. Light becomes heavy. Contrary influences yield at His touch, Ps. iv. 7. The special lessons of the former miracle Jesus unfolds in the following verses (see Westcott).

(3.) Christ followed by the multitude, 22-25. 22-24. The reading of R.V. differs from A.V. There is some uncertainty about the Greek text, but the sense is tolerably plain. There was but one boat taken by the disciples, with whom Jesus had not sailed. The accuracy of the writer is very evident. The problem was, what had become of Jesus? 22. Many had scattered; but John speaks of those who lingered in hopes of still seeing, or perhaps persuading Jesus. 23. They took the boats that had come from Tiberias, and were lying near the place, and sailed to Capernaum. *After the Lord had given thanks* (see above): singled out, probably, as the only apparently Divine act, and therefore effective.

(4.) Discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, 26-59. There are two classes of men who are represented in chs. v. and vi. respectively. There are those who will not come to Christ, and those who come to Christ for false ends. In Jerusalem men denied that the Father had sent Jesus as the Son. In Galilee they did not deny this, but the question turned on the point, What had the Father sent the Son to do? To give perishing meat, or meat

say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.
 27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

abiding to eternal life. It will be observed, then, that in this wonderful passage there are two great thoughts—(1) Christ the only true life of men; and (2) Christ the life of man through His death. As in ch. v., the keynote is in the words, “The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth;” here the keynote is in the words, “I am the bread of life.” These words are repeated, vers. 35 and 48. In the former place Jesus insists on Himself as being personally the only source of life eternal to men, to whom men must come; in short, man’s duty is summed up toward God in believing on Him. He then explains what it is to come to Himself, and how impossible it is for any one to come whom the Father does not draw,—there is a false coming and a true. In the latter place Jesus proceeds to show how it is that He becomes the life of men, and of what nature that life is—a life eternal—a life lasting through death, and going on to resurrection completeness; while He becomes this life by offering His human nature in sacrifice unto death.

26-40. First phase of discussion. 26. Jesus answers their state of heart, not their question. “Our Saviour Christ, not being like man, who knows man’s thoughts by his words, but knowing men’s thoughts immediately, He never answered their words, but their thoughts” (Bacon). *Verily, verily*, introduces serious matter. *Signs* (miracles); see on ver. 2 and on ii. 11. They sought Jesus, not because they saw *something deeper in Himself* than the power of feeding them with loaves and fishes, signs of the power to feed the soul. The miracle was a miracle; they were quite content with it, and sought nothing higher, more abiding. *Were filled*. Not the word in ver. 12. A more sensuous word, *fattened*, descriptive of their desires, used in Matt. xiv. 20.

27. *Work not*, etc., Deut. viii. 3; cp. iv. 13 f. To turn their thoughts and desires from carnal things to spiritual things: to impress them with their infinitely more serious claim, to convince them that He had come to care for that life in them which does not die; and to assure them that He was able, and qualified by God the Father, to give them the life eternal,—were Christ’s first aims in addressing them so. Observe the close parallel with the discourse to the woman of Samaria. “We know that our souls feed on the doctrine of the gospel while it is effectual in us by the virtue of the Spirit. Therefore since faith is the life of the soul, whatever nourishes and advances faith is compared to food. And it is called incorruptible, that we may know our souls do not feed for a day, but are trained into the hope of immortal blessedness; for the Lord begins the work of our salvation to perform it to the day of Christ” (Calvin). *Son of man*: the name used here is significant in the light of the following statements, ver. 53 ff. They knew Whom He meant. *Shall give*. Salvation is Christ’s direct, personal, and free gift; as free as the “perishing meat” of the previous day would be the meat that abideth to eternal life; but it must be sought. *For Him the Father—even God—hath sealed*, iii. 33. The miracle was such an attestation; it was the act of a father providing for his hungry children. By that, as by other things, they might perceive the stamp of heaven upon Him, v. 36, x. 25, 37 f. (Some think that the figure is taken from the custom of a baker stamping his name

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might
 29 work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them,
 This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he
 30 hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest
 thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou
 31 work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is
 32 written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus
 on his bread.) Jesus then tells them that He has better gifts for them than
 loaves and fishes; and bids them earnestly set their minds on these, with the
 assured certainty of gaining them.

28. *Work the works of God.* Compare the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Mark x. 17. A natural question now; Jesus bade them *work*; and they desire His instruction. They will readily do something pious, provided the miracle is repeated. "Works of God" are works pleasing to God, and by which life eternal is gained. But had they not the law and the prophets? Yes, but here was a living Prophet, with a living voice. The natural mind flies to good works, in order to please God. Jesus had offered a *gift*, as well as exhorted them to *work*. It is characteristic that the offer is ignored. Even under the clear light of gospel truth men are readier to work for acceptance with God than take the completed acceptance with God which Jesus offers in grace. Yet, too, the kingdom must be taken by violence.

29. *That ye believe on Him*, etc. "A remarkable passage," Calvin. What shall we do? they asked. Jesus said, Believe in me. The one great work required by God, and acceptable to God, and itself wrought by God, for gaining you acceptance with God, is faith in me, iii. 15 f., 36, v. 24, 40. This faith regards the Sent, the Sender, and the reason why He has been sent. This is the one "good work" which is the spring out of which every other flows. Done in a moment, it continues on in its results through the whole life. For, as i. 12 f. and iii. 3 ff. show, faith implies regeneration and Sonship. But faith in Christ is born of self-despair, which these Jews had not yet reached.

30 f. Understanding that Jesus was calling them to surrender themselves to His guidance as completely as their fathers did to Moses, and possibly disappointed at the turn Jesus was giving the conversation, they ask Him to give them a sign (Matt. xvi. 1), which would be as wonderful and as convincing as was the manna, given for forty years to their fathers in the wilderness. Meaning, no doubt, "Continue to give us bread, as you did yesterday; follow up yesterday's miracle with another, and we shall believe in you as implicitly as our fathers did in Moses." Men can praise when it suits their purpose; but cp. Num. xi. 6, xxi. 5, for the opposite picture. The Jews had a saying, "As was the first revealed, so shall be the second: the first made manna descend, so the second shall make manna descend as it is written," Ps. lxxii. 16. The manna was regarded as their greatest wonder. *What then doest thou for a sign?*—as compared with Moses or other eminent prophets of God. *Believe thee, not on thee*: a great difference. *Bread out of heaven*, Neh. ix. 15; Ps. lxxviii. 24 f., and cv. 40. Jesus had led their thoughts to spiritual things; but they easily return to temporal. Jesus had spoken of the *seal* of the Father being on Him and His work. The message He brought them was from a living God and Father, Who sought His straying children to come back and be at peace with Him. But to recognise such a seal, one must have something of the desire of a

33 said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven ; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

child towards the Father : a heart capable at least of being touched by proofs of the Father's love ; and feeling in some measure its loneliness, and its sorrow, and its sin ; yearning for a Father—a Father's heart, a Father's forgiveness, and the way home to the Father. There was nothing responsive in them to this seal of the Father. It kindled no desire. But the miracle touched them ; and Jesus—in so far as He did the miracle, and would promise to do more. It was a *sign from heaven* they sought ; for the Father's seal—for the knowledge, love, certainty of, and filial obedience to, a Father—they had no aspiration. Men often thus crave for signs from heaven in proof of Christ and His gospel, overlooking the Father's seal. It is to heart and conscience as needing Divine love and pardon that Jesus makes His strongest appeal. The evidences of His Divine mission are moral and spiritual mainly.

32 f. They were wrong in their interpretation of their past history. They were contrasting Jesus with Moses, and the single day's feeding with the forty years' provision of manna. Jesus says, It was not Moses, but *God*, who gave you the manna. “In the sacrament of the manna God was actually giving Christ” (Edwards, T.C., *1 Cor.* p. 247). 32. (“*The bread from heaven*,” not “*that bread*,” etc.) And the manna was after all only a type and shadow of the true bread from heaven, the food of the soul, which God the Father is *now giving* them ; for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life—not to Jews only, but to the world. “The manna indeed came down from the visible heaven, *i.e.* from the clouds ; but not from the eternal kingdom of God, whence life flows to us” (Calvin). *It was not Moses*, etc. The instrument blinds them to the Divine Source and Agent, to whom Jesus would lead them up, *then and now*. And the outward and perishable blinds them to the spiritual and eternal. *My Father* : a suggestive expression ; one that was fitted to arrest their attention. The thought of God as a Father was not absolutely strange to these Galileans (iv. 21) ; yet not so familiar (and certainly not at all familiar when thus used by Jesus—*My Father*, and not *your Father* or *our Father*) as not to have roused them to ask what it might signify for them : whether, *e.g.*, the thought of God as a Father who had sent His Son, might not lead to the thought of the glory and privilege of having such a Father, and of the need in themselves which that responded to, and the thought of what the best gift would be that a Divine Father could give. Observe, *My Father gives*. In ver. 27, *The Son of man gives*. *The true bread*, *i.e.*, ver. 27, meat abiding to eternal life, the reality of which every other gift is a poor symbol ; still closer defined as being the *Bread of God* (cp. Lamb of God, i. 29) which God Himself provides, and “*the living bread*,” ver. 51, which alone is worthy of the name, and which supports the soul, and *giveth life unto the world*. The contrast with the limited circle in which the manna was enjoyed is clear. Perhaps also Jesus means to lay stress on the power of this Bread of God not only to *sustain* life, but actually to *give* it to a world that is spiritually dead ; see ver. 24 and iii. 16. And the life given is the life eternal of ver. 27. Observe “*that which cometh down*,” etc., and not “*He who*,” etc. The Bread of God therefore has these two attributes : it is Divine in *source* and *effects*.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.
 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on

34. *Lord, evermore give us this bread*: so iv. 15, “Lord, give me this water.” Not ironically, as Calvin thinks. Their carnal hopes were raised. A sign from heaven; bread more abundant, and more potent than the manna, seemed to be promised. “They were seeking something in Christ other than Christ Himself” (Calvin). They recognised that Jesus claimed the power to dispense it as He had said, ver. 27; but it was only an earthly blessing they wanted—plenty to eat—under the patronage no doubt of heaven. If He did this, their belief of Him would follow.

35. Jesus at last identifies this greatest of Divine blessings with Himself. Jesus now offers *Himself*, for His own appearance on earth is the greatest of all wonders. *I am the Bread of life.* Lücke affirms this phrase to have been not unfrequent in the Jewish schools. (Pronoun emphatic.) Note the various epithets: “The meat which abides unto life eternal, given by the Son of man;” “the true Bread from heaven;” “the Bread of God;” “the Bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world;” and here: “the Bread of Life;” cp. also “Tree of Life;” “Water of Life;” and cp. similar great expressions in John’s writings on which one could hang his entire theology: “I am the Light of the world;” “the Door;” “the Good Shepherd;” “the Way, the Truth, and the Life;” “the True Vine;” “Alpha and Omega;” “the First and the Last and the Living One;” “the Root and Offspring of David;” “the Bright and Morning Star.” What bread is to the body, Christ is to the soul. As the body requires for its support this daily bread of earth, material outside of itself, since it has not the principle of its continuance in itself and is dependent on such supply, so the soul requires for its support Christ, an object outside of itself, not having the principle of life in itself, depending on the fulness which Christ and Christ alone affords to it. Here the analogy fails. For this *true* bread is that which *imparts* life, as well as *sustains* it; and in its production we have no hand, as we have with bread of earth, great Divine gift as this last is. Christ is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, ready for use, as was its symbol, the manna. All we have to do is to come and take and eat. The actual assimilation of Christ’s life and ours as reflected in that of the bread and our bodies is an idea that is dwelt on fully afterwards. *He that cometh to me*, etc., see v. 40. *He that believeth*, etc., see iv. 14. It is to this great thought that Jesus has been leading up. And this is the first critical point in this discourse. These Galileans were coming to Him with their expectations, roused by His miracles and otherwise, that He would be the minister of some great and enduring good, like Moses of old time, perhaps the Messiah Himself. They were prepared to give Him their allegiance if He proved Himself invested with powers to bring heaven’s mercies on them. And Jesus now tells them that He is *Himself* God’s last and greatest blessing to them, the substance and the antitype of all the blessings that were temporary in their past; that not what He can *give* so much as what *He is* personally, they have to think of. Beyond Himself there is no good. To have Him is to have the eternal life of God. He satisfies the hunger and thirst of every one that comes to Him and believes in Him. The claim is great, but not greater than is proved in the experience of those who do come and believe in Christ, vii. 37 (see on iv. 14). Only they must

36 me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have
37 seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall

come to Him and believe in Him. To *come to Christ* and to *believe on Him* are the same act, v. 40, etc. Faith is a coming to Him, because it is the close personal dealing, the embrace of Christ in the arms of the soul, and after a return *as if* from the far country. Individual faith, and that alone, could make them capable of receiving the blessings God was offering them in His Son, so ver. 29. *Shall never thirst.* Jesus must break the bonds of any earthly figure fully to represent all that He is to the soul; and see ver. 55. Lücke thinks it possible there is an allusion to the fact that no sooner was manna given to Israel than a new want for water assailed them, Ex. xvii. 1 ff. The manna could do nothing for that need. *This Bread from heaven* meets all needs. They were asking Jesus to supply them with a proof of His ability to be their Messiah, and then to supply them with the Bread of God which gives life to the world. Jesus, while identifying Himself with that Bread, demands from them *faith*. The sign of His ability to give is to be sought in this personal relation with Himself, expressed by coming to and believing on Him. Unless we come and believe, we do not know that He is the Bread of God. We must take and eat, and in this personal participation alone is each one certified of the power of Jesus to satisfy spiritual hunger and thirst for evermore. Outside of Him there is no assurance possible, Ps. xxxiv. 8; 1 John v. 10. "The taste in the bread is a sufficient criterion" (Bengel). It is not enough that there is satisfaction for mind, heart, and conscience in Jesus. Each one must come and take for himself. Faith is the high road to assurance. Observe, Christ personally is Bread of Life; not His *doctrine* simply. This thought rules the passage.

36. *But I said unto you*, etc., see ver. 26: when He told them that their motive in seeking Him was not the attraction of His own Person as having a message to them from the Father, but the attraction of His merely temporal gifts. There may be a *seeing* of Jesus which does not result in *believing*. Seeing is not always believing. The more one sees in this sense, it does not follow the more he believes. Conviction rests on personal experience of Him Whom we believe, not on something *before* we believe. This does not mean that we are to believe without having reasonable grounds for belief. Jesus had shown sufficient proofs to these Galileans that He was come from the Father to save them. But they were carnal. They desired a King to fight for them, not a Saviour to save them from their sins. They desired temporal mercies; they cared less for spiritual. Hence they *saw* Jesus, but their eyes were blinded by earthly prepossessions, and they did not believe; they did not *desire* to believe. Their case is not singular. We see in Jesus what faith and spiritual sympathy enable us to see, and no more. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not. Jesus is seen and touched, but not trusted. Jesus therefore assures them that the sign asked for had been given; Himself the object and the evidence both; the Father's seal on Him being His own power and guarantee to satisfy their spiritual needs. But they did not care for such a sign. They wanted, as men want still, something over and above Jesus as proof of His Divine mission and claims; they wanted, besides, the promise of good here, and the spiritual world might be left out of account.

37 f. Possibly some interruption may have taken place here; the conception of never hungering or thirsting may have been too much for their carnal

come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise minds. Jesus would seem to warn them and encourage them at once. If they would not come, still some should certainly come,—the gift to Him of His Father,—and He on His part would in nowise reject the individual coming to Him, for He was in entire unison with the Father's will. *All that which the Father, etc.* The adjective is neuter in Greek, as in ver. 39 and xvii. 20, 1 John v. 4, and the R. V. makes it apparent. Possibly the idea is first that of the collective body of believers, and then of each individual by himself, *him that cometh*. Bengel's remark is, that what the Father has given to the Son is so termed *all* (singular neuter); those who come to the Son are described in masculine or plural: *every one, or they*. The Father has given the whole mass that all may be a unity; that whole the Son evolves individually in carrying out the Divine plan. *Giveth to me.* Coming to Jesus is therefore the result of this giving by the Father, see ver. 65. Is it something outside individual experience or within it? Is this *giving* the same as the *drawing* (ver. 44), the *hearing* and *learning* of the Father (ver. 45), of which again coming to Christ is the result? Is it something outside individual experience or within it? Is the drawing the result of the giving, or the giving of the drawing; or are both the same? Is this gift regarded here as a determinate thing, or is it spoken by anticipation, as if it were "all that the Father *may happen* to give," etc.? (Observe the tense is perfect: *hath given*, in ver. 39; so in xvii. 2, 6, 12, 24.) In other words, this giving by the Father to the Son of the collective body of believers means either some act preceding the process by which each is brought to Christ and determining the whole, or the process itself viewed in its result. It is either the Divine *predestination* of men to belong to Christ, or it is the *effectual calling* of men to Christ, or it may simply be taken as the Divine ordainment viewed from the point of results. That the neuter pronoun is meant to imply an indefiniteness in this Divine transaction as to individuals can hardly be granted. (But it is to be admitted that in ver. 39 Jesus speaks from the point of view of *having already in His own keeping* that which the Father has given Him; of which He shall lose nothing, but shall raise it up at the last day; so Bengel.) Was it not natural for Jesus at this hour to fall back on the eternal purpose of His Father as that which, notwithstanding all the disappointment and unbelief and the like He was experiencing, should be carried out? Even human unbelief itself is subject to God, and is working out His purposes. Remember, too, the circumstances when these words were spoken. Christ's ministry in Galilee was closing. Results, so far as He was personally concerned, were becoming clear. Many would follow Him as a political leader, or for temporal prospects. Few looked to Him as the Son sent by the Father to show them the way to the Father, and how to be reconciled to the Father in their own consciences. Jesus knew what was about to happen, knew that that day most of His professing followers would leave Him when they became aware that He was not to fulfil their carnal expectations. For the sake of those who were faithful to Himself, for His own sake, and for the sake of God, it was necessary that He should make clear that His mission was no failure; that it depended not on human will, not on human acceptance, not on popularity, not on any chance or anything of the kind. Though all should leave Him then, yet all that the Father giveth Him shall come to Him. His mission was divinely ordained; and it lay not in man's unbelief or opposition or indifference to thwart its success. Faith was no

38 cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again

accidental thing either. For these men themselves such warning must have had the effect of making them ask for what they had been looking to Jesus, and search their own consciences in days to come for any proofs of the drawing or giving of the Father. *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* The giving, God's act ; the coming, man's. A most gracious encouragement to every individual soul, and specially to such as are coming or striving to come to Christ ; see iii. 21. While Jesus makes men feel the solemnity of having to deal with Him, and that their acceptance or rejection of Him is not a mere contingency, He throws wide open the arms of His love and grace, and the *negative* of Christ is therefore more emphatic than a *positive* would be. The figure suggested by the "cast out" is that of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. viii. 12, xxii. 13. An awakened conscience says, We deserve to be cast out ; and then this assurance of Jesus is light in darkness.

38-40. Reason why He will not cast out any one coming to Him. He has come down from heaven to carry out the Father's will, not His own ; see v. 30. His conduct on earth might be liable to fluctuations, as He was subjected to treatment unworthy of His love. He might be filled with resentment, e.g. might reject one who had rejected Him ; might turn cold in His affections. But this cannot be ; for there is a will for Him to abide by and do—the will of the Father who sent Him, the eternal will of the God of love and grace, of the unchanging and unchangeable God ; and His own will is in perfect harmony with that will. Self-interest, or partiality, or prejudice, has no place in His motives. Had He been following His own will, He would have responded to their wish to make Him king. Probably many who presently left Him would think afterwards of these words in the secrecy of their hearts and consciences, and might repent. They were the words of One who did not let self interfere with His actions ; who accepted human scorn, and indifference, and enmity, without retaliating, and without being moved from His purposes ; because He had come from the Father with a purpose of infinite mercy for them ; and that will of the Father must be done. That will Jesus now describes in a twofold fashion. (1) Ver. 39, from the Divine side. (2) Ver. 40, from the human side. Cp. the corresponding twofoldness in v. 24 f. (1) *That of all which He hath given*, etc. The Divine side. In the Divine decree all is fixed beyond the possibility of man's will to change. God has a will for men in the mission of His Son, and the Son has come to execute it ; and whatever opposition the execution of it may meet with, all is definite and certain. There is no haphazard in this work. God has entrusted it to One who will lose nothing of it, but who will raise it all up at the last day. Cp. v. 29. Jesus here claims resurrection power, as before, when speaking to the Jerusalem Jews. The idea seems at first to be hardly apposite. But He has already spoken of the meat that abides to eternal life, of the bread that gives life to the world, of the quenching of hunger and thirst for evermore by coming to Himself. And the theme of His discourse must always be kept in view—namely, what gives men the life everlasting for which, consciously or unconsciously, they crave ; what gives it and what supports it, and therefore

40 at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day.
 41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the

what will preserve them through the darkness of death and the grave itself. Hence the thought becomes one of the most prominent in the chapter. And the eternal life, of which faith is now the vehicle to the soul, will in the resurrection receive its public manifestation, as that will be the glorious perfecting of what is here begun. In what form the believer shall be raised is not said any more than in ch. v. 28 f. ; but as there, the resurrection is regarded as an act of Christ's Divine power, here, it is from the point of view of the believers themselves ; they shall be cared for by Christ though their bodies die ; they shall be raised again because they are the Father's own gift and precious. *At the last day, vv. 40, 44, 54, xi. 24* ; called also The Day of the Lord, The Great Day (on Jewish beliefs, see previous note on ch. v.). The importance of such a statement as this would appear in the result — when many left. Nothing was in reality lost. Christ can appeal to the *last day*, which will vindicate God's ways. (2) *That every one who beholdest the Son, etc.* The human side. According to R. V. read in ver. 39, "This is the will of Him that sent me," and in ver. 40, "This is the will of my Father." In the one case the mission, its purpose, its definiteness, certainty of success, are reflected in the words, "Him that sent me." In the other case, the love, and the grace, and the will to save to the uttermost, are reflected in the words, "My Father." (R. V. reads, "For this is the will," etc.) *Every one who beholdest the Son, and believeth on Him.* Here again individualizing, as before in the second clause of ver. 37, opposed to the collective "All that which" of ver. 39 and of first clause of ver. 37. Here the free will of man, his responsibility as having the Son of God presented to him for acceptance, the will of God the Father as a will that all men should have life eternal, and as giving all men who behold the Son the opportunity to secure that life, are as clearly intimated as the Divine sovereignty in the previous verse. There, everything rests with God ; here, everything rests with man. There, Jesus is caring for those who have been entrusted to Him ; here, Jesus is offering Himself to all, and inviting all to come to Him and have life. It is well that we should keep both these sides equally in remembrance. *Beholdest* ; more than *seeth*, as in A.V. ; an attentive gaze ; a considering of Him ; whether the vision of Christ be direct, as then, or indirect through His word, as now. Faith is not demanded apart from some knowledge at least ; see v. 24. *I will raise him up* (pronoun emphatic here) : if he does his part — faith, I will do mine — give him the eternal resurrection life. Hence it is the privilege of every one who thus beholds and believes, to believe further that he is the object of the Father's gift to the Son, and that he shall never be lost out of Christ's hands ; see x. 28 f. The testimony of the Holy Spirit seals our faith. "Hence his own faith is an abundant witness to each of his eternal predestination by God" (Calvin). It is therefore the Father's will that every believer should enjoy assurance of faith, and by the presence of the Spirit every believer is also certified of perseverance to the end, Phil. i. 6.

41-51. Second phase of the discussion. The Jews murmured because Jesus says He is the Bread which came down from heaven ; and (1) Jesus solemnly warns them that no one can accept Him who has not been drawn

42 bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from 43 heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, 44 Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: and

by the Father; (2) He reasserts His claim to be the Bread of Life; (3) He assures them that those who accept Him shall never die; (4) and finally He explains that the bread He will give is *His flesh* for the world's life.

42. *The son of Joseph*, i. 45, Luke iii. 23; Mark vi. 3, the Son of Mary; cp. Matt. xiii. 55, son of the carpenter. *Whose father and mother we know*. That Joseph was dead would hardly be inferred from this statement; but see ii. 1, 12. It shows, however, that the circumstances of the supernatural birth were not as yet known. The same question, *How now doth he say*, etc., would have been in point, with a difference, after the miracle, "How now doth He feed five thousand men with bread in the wilderness?" They like the fact, but dislike the inference. They understood that He was claiming to be something more than a prophet or teacher sent from God in the words, "I came down," etc.

43 ff. The Divine dignity of Jesus appears as well as His tender desire for their souls. Jesus replies to their question—(1) The Father must teach and draw them; and if they were willing learners in the Father's school, they should come to Him, the Son; (2) Experience of Christ would bring its own convictions. *No man can come to me*, etc. There is almost an admission on His part of the difficulty of perceiving His claims, and surrendering to them. At ver. 37 the tone of thought is this: You may not believe in me, yet I shall not be without those who believe in me; for all that the Father giveth me shall come to me. Here it is this: You are surprised that I said, I came down from heaven; but murmur not, you must be taught of the Father to understand it, and so come to me. What is put positively at ver. 37 is put here negatively, and with greater incisiveness. All that the Father giveth shall come, and none but whom the Father draws can come. If the drawing of the Father is not the same act as the giving of the Father, it is at all events its necessary result. In the things of God a man must be humble. *Draw*, xii. 32; Jer. xxxi. 3; Hos. xi. 4. What is the *drawing of the Father*? Jesus illustrates and enforces it by a quotation from Isa. liv. 13 (from the Heb. not LXX.), "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." And He adds that every *hearer* and *learner* from the Father comes to Him (cp. Matt. xi. 27, "No one knoweth the Son save the Father"; and Matt. xvi. 17, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven")—a doubly significant passage, because in all probability the incident is the same as in this chapter). If we compare the very similar passage in v. 37-40, where Jesus accuses the Jerusalem Jews of rejecting the witness borne by the Father to Him in *word* and *conscience*, we conclude that the drawing by the Father to Christ of men, who have heard and learned from the Father, presupposes the fact that those so drawn, instead of rejecting this witness through word and conscience, have been listening to it, questioning with their own hearts what it signifies, yielding to its teaching and admonition in so far as these imply an ideal of righteousness to be striven after with sincerity, a sense of moral and spiritual imperfection, a dependence on God, and a need

45 I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father,

of Him to know, and trust, and love as a Father, together with the sense of responsibility to Him as One to be dealt with in judgment. These are the same of whom the Lord has already said that they "do the truth," iii. 21 (so far as word and conscience have made it plain to them), and so are welcoming the fuller light shining in Himself (cp. viii. 47, "He that is of God heareth God's words"). They are those who, in any measure and with any light, labour for the meat that endures to life eternal. The Father's *drawing* or *teaching* is therefore no arbitrary, capricious act, proceeding according to no rules, using no known means; something so mysterious that one has excuse if he has not received it, and can only wait God's time to give it. Faith is, no doubt, the direct work of the Holy Spirit. All who have come to Christ confess that but for the drawing of the Father they never could or would have come. The will of the flesh has no place in this. "The Jews relied on their own strength" (Bengel). "Born of God;" "Power to become sons of God;" "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us," etc. : these are truths not to be explained but by the effectual influence of Divine grace on the soul of man. We need to be told that it is a great and glorious work of God that is wrought upon the soul when Jesus is received. But, on the other hand, Jesus is putting the responsibilities of these men clearly before them, as before us all, as men who are the receivers of the Father's witness to the Son, in all these channels of revelation alluded to, in all the gracious influences that press on heart and conscience, to win the will from evil, and compel it to the love and practice of holiness. If they had any desire for heaven, and a craving of heart for the Father there; if their hearts had thrilled with desire, and hope, and love, responsively at the very sound of the word Father; if that had awakened longings only half known to them before,—then they would have perceived that Jesus had indeed come down from heaven to tell them what was there, and to tell them the way to get to it themselves. Jesus did not desire to raise a barrier in their way. But He desired to have them ask, Why is the Father not drawing us? Do we really care to have a Father more than for any other blessing, more than for the meat that perishes? Would we rather have that meat than a Father, and a Father teaching us how to be His loving sons? *The Father who sent me.* The mission of the Son was to bring the Father's prodigal sons to know and believe His love to them, and so to bring them home to the Father again. This mission, its purpose and character,—a Father sending a Son on such an errand,—ought to awaken a response of sympathy and desire in the prodigal sons, who are yet sons, because the Father created them, and because, though rebellious, the Father loves them, and because, though alienated by wicked works, they yet retain something of the Father's likeness. *The Father who sent me:* by these words our Lord endeavours to recall the lost chords of Divine love, on the ground that His mission must find an echo in men's hearts; Ps. xxii. 27, "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord." *Hath learned from the Father.* (Observe, the Father, and not *My Father.*) The Father is a teacher of no exclusive sect, or party, or school, or nation; all are welcome to His school, and all may enjoy and know they have His teaching and training. But all are not willing to receive

46 cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father,
 47 save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily,
 verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath ever-
 48, 49 lasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat
 50 manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread
 which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof,

it. It is a discipline of heart, and conscience, and will, rather than a discipline of mind. *Taught of God*; see 1 Thess. iv. 9. The phrase would mean, originally, a more direct and effective work of the Spirit of God in men, like that foretold in Jer. xxxi. and Joel iii. *Cometh unto me*. "This is the sole wisdom which all the elect learn in the school of God—to come to Christ" (Calvin). Cause and result. The Father draws to the Son; and, on the other hand, the Son gives access to the Father; see following verse and xiv. 6. They had come to Him, indeed, in one way, but not as drawn by the Father, not as men who desired to know and find a Father, and in Jesus a Brother to help. (Paul's word for the same Divine action is *call*, 1 Cor. i. 9, etc.) *The prophets*: the second division of the Old Testament, according to the Hebrew canon. The three divisions were—law, prophets, psalms, Luke xxiv. 44.

46. Cp. v. 37, "Ye have neither heard His voice," etc. To prevent any misconception He says: *Not that*, etc.; for it was of the inner vision of God in the stirvings of the Spirit with the conscience and heart that Christ spoke. But even so, they were not to think that such communion with the Father, as was possible for them before knowing Christ, took the place of that knowledge of the Father which Christ, and Christ alone, could give. Christ alone has direct, intuitive, and perfect knowledge of the Father. And all we know is through Him; cp. i. 18, iii. 13; Heb. i. 2 f. Our knowledge of God unto salvation is not derived from an inner light, but from the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Son has *seen* the Father; has *declared* Him; has testified what He has seen and heard. All certainty rests on Christ's veracity. *He hath seen the Father*. But faithfulness to that inner light leads to recognition of Jesus Christ when He is presented in His word. (Read: "He who is *from* God," see vii. 29,—an expression which conveys pre-existence.)

47-51. Experience of Christ would bring its own conviction.

47. Faith brings life eternal, iii. 15 and 36, v. 40, ver. 40. John's watch-word. If they believed in Him, they would experience the power of heaven's life now in their souls, and so be convinced that the Author of it had come down from heaven. But without faith there can be no reception of proof, 1 John v. 13. The *present* possession as witnessed in the fruits and sense of life is to be noted. If a man has life he must know it, and rejoice in it.

48. Jesus repeats His claim; see on ver. 35; not saying, I have indeed come down from heaven, but *I am the Bread of Life*. "Faith in me will give you life, because I am," etc. (On the rise in the thought as compared with the same great declaration in ver. 35, see previous remarks.) "Believe, and you shall know and experience. I am indeed all I have said, for I can give, and do give, life to all who take me."

49 f. *Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died*. Jesus had denied that their fathers had received the true bread from heaven, ver. 32. He now, arguing from results, adds that His gift will preserve in life those receiving it, whereas the manna could not and did

51 and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for

not. Of course, just as before in ver. 32 f., there is a sort of *double entendre* in His words, intended to rouse their interest ; cp. iv. 14. Remember Jesus had said already twice over : "I will raise him up," etc. Jesus challenges the comparison of results. The process and result in every case besides is, "did eat and die." He alone can and does satisfy all the needs of men. The argument from the result, both in individual experience and in the world's history since Christ came, is conclusive.

51. *The living bread*: bread which is itself *alive* (v. 26, "life in Himself ;" cp. iv. 10, "living water ;" Heb. iv. 12, "the living word of God ;" x. 20, "a living way ;" 1 Pet. i. 3, "a living hope") ; which not only supports life but imparts it ; which sustains not only for a time, but for eternity, arresting in him who eats it the poison of sin working to death. *Which came down*, etc. : the past tense pointing out the historic fact ; the present, ver. 50, pointing out the general principle and character. Observe the emphatic repetition of the truth that the one source of life for men is from above them. Thus the *true bread* is that which *comes down* from heaven, and is the bread of *God*, the bread of *life*, the *living bread*. *If any man eat* : there is the need for individual partaking, which is *faith*. That *eating* and *believing* are essentially the same act is probable. Calvin defines the former as the result of the latter. All depends on the latitude of meaning given to *believing*. It may be the first great act of reception, or it may be the daily receiving of Christ for all the ends to which the Father gives Him. Luther took the other view : "Faith is the eater which eats and believes in Christ ;" see below. *The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world* (omit the second "which I will give" in A.V.) ; see ver. 33. For the signification of *flesh* in John, see on i. 14. It means Christ's entire humanity. And the surrender of this in death is the method by which life is given to the world, Eph. ii. 15 f. ; Col. i. 22 ; Gal. ii. 20 ; Eph. v. 2 ; 1 Tim. ii. 6 ; Tit. ii. 14. "For" is "on behalf of." The world's life is a condemned, perishing, dying thing, iii. 16, 17 ; it needs the life of God to preserve it ; and Christ by giving His human nature up to death (for He could not give His flesh in any other way) makes it possible for the world, for the individual soul, to have the Divine life, and for Himself after His glorification to give the Spirit. As in ver. 33 the supernatural source of the life of which the world must share is stated, so here it is the manner in which that life becomes available for the world. Christ must die, and His death is a free-will offering on His part. The vicarious sacrifice may not be expressly stated in these words, but they are unintelligible apart from it, and Westcott is scarcely correct in saying that the thought is "support and growth, not atonement ;" compare Mark xiv. 24 ; Luke xxii. 19. How His flesh gives life to the world, Christ goes on to explain presently. Calvin : "It is the wonderful counsel of God that He has set forth life to us in that flesh where at first was the sole material of death." (In a suggestive passage on this verse Calvin says that the humanity of Christ was the channel by which the life of God flows to us ; and as the cause of life is righteousness, and righteousness is alone in God, a full exhibition of the Divine righteousness is made in Christ's human nature, in which a sacrifice was made to expiate sin ; obedience was given to God ; and which, entirely penetrated by the Holy Spirit, was received into glory.)

52 the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his

52-60. **Third phase of the discussion.** The Jews strive with one another as to what Christ could mean by giving His flesh for the world's life. Jesus resumes by insisting on the necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, the sole condition of having eternal life, and of abiding in Him and in the Father.

52. A shade of contempt in the words *this man*. The question was not openly addressed to Jesus, who, however, knew their thoughts. Men of any spiritual susceptibility, who felt the mystery of such words, would at least have been silent.

53. Jesus insists on the *necessity* of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, if they are to have life. He does not explain. To the froward He showed Himself froward,—in one way actually heightening the difficulty, though in another way solving it. *Verily*, etc. This is the third time Jesus uses this solemn asseveration. *Except ye eat*, etc. The reception of the Divine life in Christ depends on His historic manifestation. No life without the Son of God becoming flesh and blood, and then surrendering them to death, and so becoming a new principle of life in men believing in Him. As in eating and drinking the body assimilates the nourishing properties of food, so this spiritual eating and drinking convey the fact that faith is an inner laying hold of Christ personally,—a receiving Him, a resting on Him, an incorporation with Him. We abide in Him, and He abides in us. The eating His flesh and drinking His blood convey the fact that faith is the spiritual appropriation of Christ in respect of the great work which He was sent by the Father to do, namely, to shed His blood for sin; and taking to oneself the whole efficacy of this death. Eating and drinking is faith; eating and drinking the flesh and blood is faith in the atoning, propitiating power of Jesus. The passage is figurative, as suited the circumstances when Christ uttered it; and the interpretation of it must be ruled by John's fundamental position, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life." But then it explains the remarkable nature and effects of faith: it explains the special reasons for the exercise of faith in the Son of God. Faith brings so absolute a union and communion with Christ, that there is but one common principle of life in the Saviour and the saved. The believer lives, moves, and has his being in Christ. There is a mutual indwelling. This truth is also one that is fully unfolded in subsequent discourses by our Lord, especially those of the night of betrayal. No figure, not even the remarkable one of this passage, can do justice to the conception or the fact. All that it means must be proved in the region of the personal experience of believers, who know that they have the consciousness of a fellowship with Christ which makes them feel that Christ by the Holy Spirit is the very principle of their personality; that deepest down in them—ruling thought and feeling—is Christ. Again, in the faith which so embraces and makes Christ one's own, there must go more or less of an intelligent apprehension of all that Christ is personally; of all that He claims; of all that as sent by the Father He has done for the world. Faith is not the sport of a devout but hazy and mystical imagination. It is a dealing with the real "Son of man;" with the historic person of the man

Christ Jesus, who appeared once in the world, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and went back to the glory of the Father. It is a receiving Him for the purpose for which the Father sent Him: to give us the life which in ourselves we do not have and never can apart from Him—the life eternal—the life of abiding in the Son and in the Father; and which life He has procured for us—made it possible for us to have—by dying in our behalf, i. 29, x. 11; 1 John ii. 2, etc. Why it is Christ—as the propitiation for our sins—on whom faith needs to rest, is to be answered by unfolding the suggestion in the words, “Ye have not life in yourselves.” The life which naturally we do have is a thing of condemnation and death, being hopelessly involved in the bonds of sin. Deliverance from it can be obtained only by the death of Christ, which was related to our sin, and which destroyed death in root and fruit. But, lastly, observe the personal relation which is maintained in all this. The figure cannot cover the whole ground: no figure can. A living Son of man giving us His own flesh and blood to eat takes us beyond its lines, as we see in the idea the necessary glorification of Christ after His death and resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom we are drawn into believing recognition and acceptance of Christ, and made the partakers of the great blessings mediated for men by His life, death, and resurrection. But the chief thought in it all is the partaking of *Himself*; and of *Himself* in the *virtue of His death*. Faith receives Him as a Christ who died for us, and who carries on within the soul the efficacy of that death, becoming as if a Christ dying *within us*. “I am crucified with Christ; and I live no more, but Christ liveth in me.” Thus Christ repeats His own experience in that of those who receive Him. His death to sin is theirs; they die with Him to sin; His life to righteousness in the glory of God is their present, actual, risen life. It is not in some fact outside of them that they believe simply: they take Christ—Christ who died and rose again—as dying and rising again, and enabling them also to die and rise again, into their souls. These main points in Paul’s theology are virtually contained in these words of Christ, setting forth the need and the fact of a personal living into Christ—Christ dying, and rising, and possessing the fulness of the Holy Spirit. And it is implied that this is a continuous process. Christ is our daily bread. We must daily feed on Him. The food of yesterday does not suffice for to-day. The faith we exercised in Christ yesterday must be renewed to-day and to-morrow. Not once only and for all did we believe in Him; not once only and for all did we trust His propitiating power; we must be continually believing on Him; we must be continually eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and coming to Him for life. It is possible that the fact of the Passover being near at hand (ver. 4) may have suggested to Jesus this special line of discourse. That there is an allusion to the Lord’s Supper is out of the question; though, no doubt, the great truths which underlie and are illustrated in that sacrament are set forth here; cp. notes on ch. iii. The distinction is often pointed out between this spiritual eating and drinking of Christ’s flesh and blood, and what is called the *sacramental* eating and drinking of His body and blood in the Holy Communion. The latter is the reflection and representation of the former; and if there is any efficacy in this, it must flow from the former. When I exercise faith in Christ crucified, I eat Christ’s flesh and drink Christ’s blood; when I partake of the sacrament of the Supper worthily, I also exercise faith in Christ crucified; and also eat His flesh and drink His blood; receiving nothing new or different, however, by the sacrament, which faith without the sacrament cannot give me; receiving that only more

54 blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up

clearly to my mind, more comfortably to my heart, which otherwise I receive ; in the fact of outwardly exhibiting by bread and wine what inwardly I do with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and the Spirit ; see *Shorter Catechism*, Qn. 96.

Son of man, as in ver. 27. The expression for the ideal and representative human nature of our Lord is appropriately introduced in this discourse. It gives some colour to the conception, favoured by Olshausen and others, that Jesus alludes to an actual participation in His glorified human body, by which the bodies of believers are now being transfigured into its likeness, planting in our mortal bodies the germ of the resurrection body. Such theories are to be held and applied cautiously. It is true we do not know all that is meant by the profound fact of union and communion with the Son of God, who is also Son of man. The union comprehends His whole personality, and will ultimately comprehend the whole of our own. Otherwise we should not need to be told, as Christ tells us here so often, “I will raise him up at the last day.” We shall be changed into “the same image,” 2 Cor. iii. 18 ; cp. Phil. iii. 21, “Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.” But these, involving the relation of matter to spirit, belong rather to the results and details of that great work of which the principle, and that alone, is here set forth by Jesus. No doubt in the absolute theology of John the bonds and bars of this material existence are entirely broken through. Believers *have* life eternal ; abide in God, Father and Son ; shall not die for ever ; are passed from death unto life ; live for ever ; never hunger ; never thirst, and the like. They are not to reach something by and by. They have attained it *now*. The resurrection is a mere incident in their life ; the natural and necessary consequence of the principle of eternal life which is within them—as they are in Christ and Christ is in them.—“To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is a figure teaching us that we are to have communion in the passion of our Lord, and are to treasure in our memory sweetly and to our use, that for us His flesh was crucified and wounded,” August. *de Doct. Christ.* iii. c. 16 (Tholuck). “Wherever Christ the Lord is preached that for our sins He gave His body to death and shed His blood for us, and I take it to my heart, believe it firmly, and cling to it : that is to eat His body and drink His blood. To eat is to believe : he that believeth also eats and drinks” (Luther).

Life in yourselves : explained by the following verses,—life eternal, the resurrection life, the life of abiding in God ; cp. v. 26 and iv. 14. The life we live outwardly goes to decay and death. The life we live inwardly, so far as it is of ourselves, has no promise of the future. We are held in the trammels of sin. We have *death* in ourselves, and that principle of death will work out to all its terrible results unless it be destroyed, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus substituted ; cp. 1 John iv. 12.

54. *He that eateth*, etc. The word in Greek here and in vers. 56, 57, 58 (last clause) is different from that already used (ver. 53 and often previously), and expresses more graphically the action, lit. *cheweth*. The emphatic negation, ver. 53, of life anywhere but in union with Christ crucified, is followed by an equally emphatic assurance of the possession of life eternal in this union. When we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, then we have (He does not say *life in yourselves*, perhaps desiring to avoid ambiguity, for

55 at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood
 56 is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my
 57 blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father
 hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth

the principle of Christian life is *Christ in us*; see ver. 56 and xv. 4; but He says) *eternal life*, and the promise of resurrection at the last day. Though we have now such a life as in principle is eternal, yet we must endure the death of the body, but shall be raised—our whole personality—at the last day. Observe the various results of eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood, in 54-59. (1) Hath eternal life, and shall be raised up at the last day; (2) abideth in me, and I in Him; (3) shall live because of me; (4) shall live for ever. There is a fineness of shading in these not to be passed over. Something is enjoyed in the *present*, and something is to be enjoyed in the *future*. It is, no doubt, to obviate the conception that this eternal life, now realized in Christ, implied no outward resurrection to follow (see 2 Tim. ii. 17 f.), that the words are added: *And I will raise him up*, etc. The present spiritual and inner experiences of the Christian shall become external experiences by and by. The salvation of Christ extends to body as well as to spirit, and makes us independent of every change in time and eternity.

55. *For my flesh is true meat*, etc. The reason why life eternal is in Christ. There is no food of the soul but Christ, and Christ crucified is the true and only food of the soul.

56. *Abideth in me, and I in him*. As food is assimilated to the body, so Christ is assimilated to the soul. It is not certain if Christ intended a difference between these two things, if to abide in Him is something other than to have Him abide in us. Usually, indeed, they are so taken, that abiding in Christ means the faith and its consequences by which we are persuaded of our standing in His acceptance with God, and that Christ abiding in us means the laying hold of Him for the principle and power of daily sanctification. It is the same order in xv. 4, “*Abide in me and I in you*,” which see. At least the entire closeness of union and communion between the believer and Christ is intended by the words (faith bringing community of life), and the permanence of them. (This is the first use of that word *abide* which occurs so often afterwards in xiv.-xvii., and the first Epistle.) There is as if a blending of two personalities. “*Christ is centre and circumference*” (Meyer).

57. Explanation of the *mode* by which the believer and Christ abide in each other. It is as Father and Son abide in each other. *As the living Father*, etc. The *living Father*; see v. 26. The Father hath life in *Himself*; cp. the Old Testament phrase, the *living God*, Ps. xlii. 2, etc.; Heb. x. 31. The source of life—of all life—is meant by the striking attribute. God is life, and in Him there is no death at all. And God is love. *Sent me*: therefore Christ was pre-existent. *And I live because of the Father*; see v. 19, 20, 26. To the Son life meant—has always meant—communion with the Father. He is, and has ever been, the Son in the bosom of the Father. But as the expression *sent me* appears to embrace Christ's historic person, we may not exclude the conception of the Son on earth living by faith in the Father, just as we have ourselves to do in regard to Himself. *As sent*, Christ lived *because of* the Father. *So he*, etc.: the believer sustains the same relation to Christ that Christ does to His Father; see xiv. 23, xv. 10, xvii. 23. In one way this

58 me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in 60 Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying ; who can hear it ?

analogy heightens the mystery. In another way it relieves it, preparing us for ver. 63.

58. Summing up the whole discourse ; once more identifying Himself with the true heavenly manna, and arguing from results as contrasted with the results of past times, ver. 49 ff. *Shall live for ever*. Observe the ascending series from ver. 53, beginning with, "ye have not life in yourselves," ending with, "shall live for ever," advancing through successive steps, affirming (1) the possession of life eternal and the power of resurrection ; (2) the principle and the maintenance of this life, abiding in Christ, and Christ abiding in us ; and (3) the absolute dependence on Christ, and the tending entirely towards Christ of the whole drift of this life. Hence, "shall live for ever ;" the conception of eternity here being referred back continually to the union and communion with Father and Son.

59. *In the synagogue teaching* : lit. "in synagogue," as in xviii. 20, as we say "in church." Lampe inclines to infer—(1) That this was spoken on the Sabbath (but there were week-days on which regular meetings were held) ; and (2) that it is part of a longer discourse. The rulers of synagogues were by no means strict in their permission to strangers or outsiders to speak, cp. Acts xiii. 15, though *Rabbis* only were formally qualified. Jesus, xviii. 20, bears witness to His common practice. The rise of the synagogue dates from the times of Ezra. In fact, the substantial germs of it we find in the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (and, farther back still, 2 Kings iv. 23), in the gathering together of the exiles on the Sabbaths to the prophets to hear God's word spoken or read. In the absence of the Temple ritual, the influence of the synagogue worship on the Dispersion, and on the Jews of the Holy Land afterwards themselves, is incalculable. It prepared the way for the conception of a spiritual worship, prayer, and the reading and exposition of God's word, with praise, which the New Testament Church simply reproduced, with the Christ believed in as come instead of as coming. The management of the synagogue was in the hands of elders or rulers, prototype of presbyters in the Christian Church. In the time of our Lord there was one synagogue at least in every smaller town ; in the larger towns more ; in Jerusalem it is said there were upwards of four hundred. (Westcott, quoting Warren's *Recovery of Jerusalem*, mentions the discovery of ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum, on a block of which is engraved a pot of manna.)

Effects of this discourse—(1) On the great majority of Christ's professcd disciples, vers. 60-66 ; (2) on the twelve, ver. 67-end.

(5.) 60-66. 60. *Hard is this word*. The word *hard* is found besides in Matt. xxv. 24 ; Acts xxvi. 14 ; Jas. iii. 4 ("fierce winds," R.V. "rough") ; Jude ver. 15. They meant, no doubt, that the whole discourse was difficult to understand, but especially that it was, so far as they did understand it, incredible, blasphemous, not to be listened to, and also that it was utterly disappointing to their expectations. The state of heart, not the state of

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at
 62 it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? *What* and if ye
 shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?
 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:

mind, determines the reception of the word of God, however hard it may be. The simple command to believe in Christ, because it means the giving up of one's own will, is one of the hardest of Christ's words. Isa. liii. 1 did not occur to them.

61. *Knowing in Himself.* The Divine consciousness of the Lord embraced all events with reference to His own mission; see ver. 64, xiii. 1, 3, xviii. 4, xix. 28; cp. Mark v. 30. He is uniformly represented as being aware of the hidden thoughts of men's hearts; see ch. ii. 25, *note*. *Offend*, or as in R.V., "cause you to stumble;" the word in Greek being that from which our English word "scandalize" is derived. The "scandal" was originally the spring stick in a trap to which the bait was attached, and which caught the creature; hence a snare, stumbling-block, etc. Christ was such a scandal to the Jews, 1 Cor. i. 23; Gal. v. 11; ch. xvi. 1.

62. *What then if*, etc. Jesus means that His ascension to the Father will prove the truth of all He has just said and claimed to be. (Rom. i. 4, "Declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.") They murmured because He said that He came down from heaven. What then if they saw Him go up to heaven, where He was before? The resurrection of Christ, which includes the return to the Father, is the ultimate ground of our belief in Him. *See*, rather "behold," as in ver. 40; not necessarily with the bodily eye, viii. 51, xii. 45, for all could not see that, and did not, but the *fact* of the ascension is presupposed by the beholding the risen Christ in faith. *Son of man*: note on i. 51. The third time Jesus calls Himself so in this discourse, vers. 27 and 53. It may not be merely a plausible suggestion that we have in these three verses a regular gradation—(1) Ver. 27, the Divine origin of the mission of the Son of man, and His Divine qualification; (2) ver. 53, the essential nature of this mission, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man," etc.; (3) ver. 62, the results and accomplishment. *The Son of man ascending up*, etc. *Ascending*: on the connection between Christ's descent from heaven and His ascent back to heaven, see iii. 13, the former proved by the latter. *Where He was before*: i.e. "heaven," ver. 38; see i. 18, "the bosom of the Father;" xiii. 3, "come from God and goes to God;" xvii. 11, "I come to thee." Or may Jesus mean, "If you think it hard to hear that you must eat my flesh and drink my blood while I am here with you on earth, what will you think of it when I am no more on earth, but ascended up where I was before?" This prepares the way for what follows, already suggested in vers. 56, 57.

63. Interpreted in many varieties of ways. Jesus had told them, ver. 53, that they had not life in themselves, and must derive it from His flesh and blood. He now tells them who the life-giving Agent within them is, and so virtually explains the mystery of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ, is the principle of the Divine life, and awakens it in man; see iii. 5 f. Hence the life awakened is spiritual, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 45, where the very same words occur, "the second Adam was a quickening spirit;" a life-giving principle, as well as a living spirit. According to Paul,

the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. 6.4 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, 65 and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

the resurrection condition of Christ is that of *Spirit*, not excluding the body of glory, but having all material elements penetrated with this higher principle “to which belong life and strength, incorruptibility and purity, and which shines forth as radiant light (*δόξα*),” Pfeiderer, *Paulinism, Introd.*; see also 2 Cor. iii. 18, “now the Lord is the Spirit;” cp. iii. 34, “the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him;” Rom. viii. 2. *The flesh.* Not the human nature of Christ in its entirety, according to John’s usual fashion of speaking (i. 14), as the contrast of iii. 6 is not to be thought of, but His literal body and blood, His physical nature, of which the Jews before Him had been exclusively thinking. To eat His flesh and drink His blood can be possible only through the Spirit who works faith. At the same time, His own literal ascension after resurrection, to which He here refers, covers the resurrection of our bodies, and their transfiguration into the likeness of the body of His glory; cp. vers. 40, 44, 54. *The sayings which I have spoken to you are spirit and life.* Note the absence of the article before spirit in this clause, and see notes on iii. 5 f. and iv. 23. *Sayings*, as in v. 47. The Holy Spirit is the Divine agent, awaking the life of God in the soul, which is a spiritual life; and the instrument which He uses is the word of Christ, which sets Christ forth; cp. v. 24. Faith is life, and faith cometh by hearing. As being therefore the channel used by the Holy Spirit in giving life, Christ’s words are “spirit and life.” The thought is directed entirely to the inner sphere—the sphere of the mind and heart. Note Christ’s belief in His utterances. They are not hard to the true receiver. “Christ’s words are pure Incarnation of Spirit and vehicle of life” (Godet); cp. xvii. 14, 17. “The sayings of Christ embrace the whole truth of God, and have for their substantial contents Christ’s appearance, work on earth, and death; so they are the sum of His whole salvation and of His life-giving Spirit, therefore the eternal, imperishable possession of His disciples” (Lücke). Therefore His sayings—because they are sayings concerning Himself mainly—cannot be torn asunder from Himself; see below, ver. 68 f.

64. As before in ver. 36, Jesus felt that man’s unbelief put limits even on His power to convince. It is as if He had said, “But why need I pursue this subject further? It is of no use; some of you are determined not to believe me.” Man’s power of resisting the Holy Ghost is both very terrible and very real, Ps. li. 11. *Knew from the beginning.* The complete knowledge by Christ of all who came round Him, and yet His acting always towards them as if He had never known who were true and who were not, is one of the mysteries of the Incarnation, and must have been one of the severest restraints under which the Son of God put Himself. Ignorance would have afforded no scope for temptation. It was necessary for His disciples, too, to know afterwards for complete faith that Jesus was never deceived by Judas or any one.

65. *Therefore I have said*, etc.; see vers. 37 and 44. The Divine side of the truth of ver. 64. Faith in Christ is the gift of the Father, Eph. ii. 8.

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked
 67 no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will
 68 ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord,
 to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

To come to Jesus lay not in *their* option. When they said, We will not have this man, God was saying, I will not have you. The responsibility that rested on their conduct, the tremendous issues at stake, the alienation of the natural heart from the Father, the thought that much lay beneath what appeared,—all this is implied in Christ's words. He was not rejecting these men; He was only pointing out to them what rejection of Himself by them involved, and what acceptance involved.

66. The warning was not heeded. *On this many of the disciples went back* (lit. to the things behind, as in Phil. iii. 13, xviii. 6, xx. 14). They wanted something other than a personal Lord. Whether final apostasy be meant, or only so far as the following of Jesus while He lived on earth, we cannot determine. It must be hoped that with some these searching words did become by and by, after the gospel of the resurrection was preached, "spirit and life." It seemed a very calamitous blow dealt to Christ's cause at the time.

(6.) 67-end. Effect on the twelve.

68. John has not spoken of the twelve before; he presupposes the Synoptics. *You [do not desire to] will not also go away?* A question that expects a negative answer. There is much pathos in the confidence which the Lord reposes in His true-hearted disciples. A trying moment for Him and them, when the large body of followers, who had given His cause prestige, no doubt, in Galilee, abandoned Him. Jesus indulged in no invective at those who left; simply expresses in this touching way His faith in the twelve,—He knows His sheep, and is known of them, x. 14.

Then comes the heart's response to Christ's appeal. Simon Peter—as usual the spokesman for the rest—utters what all but one felt, but could not say so well. This was one of the times that Simon showed at his best; ready to catch the inspiration of the moment, to say the right thing or do it. It was a noble confession, and just then must have greatly comforted the heart of Christ. Simon Peter's loyalty was not affected by the large number who left them. He could stand with his Master in a minority. He accepts Christ, hard sayings and all. He looks at every hard saying in the light of Christ, not at Christ in the light of the hard saying. *To whom shall we go away?* As if to say, Admitting there is difficulty here, where shall we be better off? Who will do more for us? Who will give clearer guidance,—show us the Father? The personal experience which Peter had of his Lord when he first met Him, was for him, as it must be for all, the immovable ground on which to rest amid uncertainty and reproach. "Da nobis alterum te" (Augustine). *Thou hast the sayings of eternal life.* Peter's judgment of Christ's sayings was not that of the men who left. Very difficult to understand some of them had been to him as to those; but Peter saw something else in them besides the difficulty; he felt that they were "spirit and life," that they revealed eternal life, that they made it real, that they explained how it could come to him, and how he could be assured of its possession. And it was not enough to express belief in His sayings. Belief in *Himself* followed (see above on ver. 63).

69 And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen

69. *We have believed, and have known.* (*We*, emphatic, opposed to those who left.) Observe how knowledge springs out of faith, just the lesson which the disciples who left refused to learn. Had they opened their hearts to Jesus, Jesus would have opened their minds to understand. Faith leads to certainty and full assurance. Not, however, that faith has no exercise of the judgment behind it, as the converse order shows. "Both conform to experience" (Meyer). The converse in xvii. 8, 1 John iv. 16; see x. 38. "Practical conviction may precede and may follow the insight which is the product of reason" (Meyer), vii. 17, viii. 32. Lücke has a fine note in which he says that, according to John's conception, knowledge and faith applied to Christ are all but equivalents, concluding thus: "In every true knowledge of Christ there is already faith, and in every true belief in Christ—knowledge." *That Thou art the Holy One of God.* Luke iv. 34; Acts iii. 14; Rev. iii. 7; cp. x. 36 and Dan. ix. 24. (Observe the correct reading in R.V. The old reading of A.V. must be given up: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" the confession recorded of Peter in Matt. xvi. 16; cp. Mark i. 24; 1 John ii. 20.) The expression, the "Holy One of God," conveys a special relation to God, and a special participation in God's holiness; a character which is holy. The unique character of Jesus, in point of perfect sinlessness, and this as attesting a special relationship to God and a special origin from God, both personal and official, these are just the foundations on which the whole superstructure of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, rests. Only hardness of heart and prejudice could avoid such a conclusion, and to have admitted so much would have led on to fuller conceptions. That the Messiahship was understood by such a title we may naturally infer, Ps. xvi. 10, lxxxix. 19. But at least the very different *ethical* standpoint of Simon Peter from that of the men who left is noteworthy. These did not want a "Holy One," because they did not feel the need of holiness for themselves.

70. Such a confession cheered Jesus in the midst of the general defection. A sifting away of much chaff is worth while when repaid by such a grain of wheat. And each of the twelve (but Judas) would thank Simon from the bottom of his heart for so expressing his feelings, and reassuring the faith which might for a moment waver at the sight of what seemed a crushing blow to their own hopes and Christ's. It was an hour like that when Christ rejoiced in spirit. To the unhesitating trust of His disciples, Jesus replies with the assurance that they, His true followers, are safe, and shall never be lost, for *He* has chosen them—not they *Him*. *Have not I chosen you the twelve?* What if many left *Him*? Has *He* not still His work to do, while there is even one man who clings to *Him* thus, and cannot let *Him* go? A man who feels that all is lost may be suddenly aroused to energy and hope because his little child clings to him in faith and expectancy. One disciple cries, "To whom shall we go?" etc., and instead of a despised and rejected Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord of glory rises before us in absolute sovereignty. *Have not I chosen you the twelve?* Cp. xiii. 18, xv. 16. Joy deep, yet not unclouded. *And of you one is a devil.* Cp. xiii. 2 and 27. It was well, however, to remind them that even so small a circle did not of itself prevent treachery and disaffection; that even *they* might fall, and

71 you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

CHAP. VII. 1. After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he

would, if they prided themselves on their present loyalty. If they were gazing at the retreating crowd with feelings of superiority—any of them, Christ would teach them to examine their own motives in remaining. One might remain with greater sin than another might go, if he were not remaining with sincere attachment to Christ. And such was the case with Judas Iscariot, who was not even a child or son of the devil, but a devil himself. Why did Jesus choose Judas, knowing him to be the man he was? (1) He could not likely have passed him over without exciting remark or suspicion. He had to act in many respects as mere men would act; His omniscience could not set aside such limits (see above on ver. 64). (2) Then men are not hardened all at once, even if their motives are questionable. It was to be hoped that the germ of evil might be crushed out by constant communion with the good. (3) But, all the same, the time must come when, if Jesus were to be faithful, He had to undeceive Judas, so far as He was concerned, by showing him to himself. And the time was now. Why did Jesus call him a devil? We may suppose that Judas joining Christ's company from mercenary motives, like those who now left, yet professing very high religious views and aspirations, felt now that his carnal hopes were irretrievably ruined, and would have gone away had he been able to do so consistently with self-respect, and with the respect which the others had for him. He was ashamed to do it. His apostle's place made it difficult. He remained because for very shame he could not go; but he cursed Jesus at heart for His infatuation in refusing to take the leadership of these Galileans; for His driving away from His discipleship for ever many who would otherwise have been a strength to His cause, and so far rendering every hope of a temporal kingdom abortive. Far better for Judas to have gone—and now. Jesus knew all that was agitating his breast, and in the greatest pity and love exposed the man to himself, hinting to him that it was time too for him to go. Every day after this in Christ's fellowship hastened on to maturity with terrible speed his diabolic character. He knew that whoever might be deceived in him, the Master was not, and the knowledge bred hate. Why did the eleven not take more notice of this extraordinary remark of the Lord? Perhaps for the best reason,—each examined his motives and heart, and trembled for himself.

71. *Son of Simon Iscariot.* So R.V. and xiii. 26. But in xiv. 22, Iscariot occurs as a name for Judas himself. Most regard the word as meaning "Man of Kerioth," Kerioth being taken as a village in Judea. It is possible that Judas being the one Judean among the disciples, may have had the post of purse-bearer entrusted to him *honoris causa*.

8. *The conflict deepens—Jesus at the feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication—Divided sentiment—The cleavage becoming more pronounced—He declares Himself the Water of Life, the Light of the World, and the Good Shepherd—Cures the man born blind, chs. vii.—x.*

CH. VII. Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles.

With this chapter a new section begins, and continues to the end of

would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

ch. x. The incidents take place at Jerusalem. It is difficult to harmonize this section with the Synoptics. Probably, the comparison is with Luke ix. 51; Matt. xix. 1; Mark x. 1. It is evident from x. 22 that not historic sequence, but a general summary of the teaching of Jesus, with its effects on the Jews during this period, is recorded.

This chapter is thus divided—(1) A remonstrance on the part of Christ's brethren with Him because He avoided Judea and Jerusalem, occasioned by the approach of the feast of Tabernacles, to which, apparently, Jesus did not intend to go, and His answer, 1-9. (2) The surprise felt in Jerusalem at Christ's non-appearance, and the varieties of opinion men held about Him, 10-13. (3) Christ about the middle of the feast appears in the Temple, and begins to teach. The Jews wonder how He has the gift of discourse, being an uneducated man. Jesus replies, and then goes back on the cure of the impotent man (ch. v.), with its bearing on the keeping of the Sabbath, and the previous charge against Himself, 14-24. (4) The people wonder that He is allowed to speak so openly, and ask if the rulers recognise Him as Christ, questioning the likelihood of that, knowing, as they do, where Jesus comes from; and the reply of Jesus, with its effects, 25-31. (5) The Sanhedrim send officers to arrest Him; Jesus continues His teaching; making, on the last day of the feast, an appeal to all who were athirst to come to Him, which made a profound impression on the people, 32-44. And (6) the return of the officers to the Sanhedrim, confessing that Christ's words had rendered them unfit to discharge their duty; the angry retort of the rulers; and their fierce reply to Nicodemus, quietly suggesting some impartial inquiry into the facts, 45-end. In this chapter, therefore, it is John's object to show the growing wave of conviction in the minds of unprejudiced hearers of Jesus that He is indeed the Christ. Their faith has difficulties to struggle against, but one after another the power of the great Teacher shakes them. Those who at first say no more than that He is a good man, advance to the further position of asking whether the Christ Himself, when He comes, can show clearer proof of His Christship, and finally venture on the explicit confidence that He is none else but the Christ Himself. Note, too, how there is another class who always take refuge in difficulties, first objecting to the moral character of Christ, that He deceives the people; next, if that is taken out of the way, objecting that the Christ must come with greater circumstance; and finally, when they can say nothing against Himself personally, finding difficulties in the letter of the Messianic predictions. There is, besides, the inveterate prejudice of the rulers, deepening into murderous hostility, who can see no proof, because they do not desire to see it. The chapter may be therefore suitably called, The growth of faith and of unbelief.

(1.) Vers. 1-9. Jesus and His unbelieving brethren.

I. After these things; see on v. 1. Was walking: a favourite expression of John's; see i. 36, vi. 66, viii. 12, xi. 9 f., 54, xii. 35, and often in his Apocalypse, borrowed from the O. T. idiom; see Ps. i. 1, cxxviii. 1. The figure applied generally to man's life is very suitable. The *literal* significance itself has a pathetic application to the Son of man, "who had not where to lay His head;" "who went about doing good." Out of the merely physical sprang, however, the ethical, i John i. 6 f., ii. 6. *In Galilee:* as at the Passover just celebrated He had been absent. *In Jewry—*

2, 3 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly : if thou do these things, 5 shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren 6 believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not

the old English word for Judea, used in the older versions of the English Bible, retained here and in Luke xxxiii. 5 ; see also Dan. v. 13 ; (the street in London called Old Jewry, and Shakespeare's Herod of Jewry).—*To kill him* ; see v. 18.

2. Cp. vi. 4. *The Jews* : proof of writing after destruction of Jerusalem. The feast of Tabernacles, one of the three great feasts, was held in late autumn, when the harvest was completed ; see for full account, Lev. xxiii. 34 ff. ; Ex. xxiii. 16 ; Deut. xvi. 13 ff. The Greek word used by John is the same as that found in Deut. xvi. 16, xxxi. 10 ; Zech. xiv. 16, 18, 19. (It is applied by Aristotle to the building of nests.)

3. *His brethren* ; see on ii. 12. *Depart hence*. They could not have known what Jesus knew of the hostile intentions of the rulers. *The works*, such as ch. vi. records. *Thy disciples*. They must have believed that there were such in Jerusalem, recalling the enthusiasm of many at least, ii. 23 ; and there is perhaps a tacit allusion to the untoward result of discipleship in Galilee, vi. 66, regarded by them with apprehension. They may have meant : such disasters may be avoided. And they were hoping that the distinction which Jesus had put from Him in Galilee might yet be forced on Him in Jerusalem, if He would only use the power wisely which He was endowed with.

4. They add that one who keeps secret such power must have reasons for shunning publicity : suggesting the doubt whether the power be there at all. The lover of secrecy has cause to dread the light ; or, the remark may be meant to press the contradictoriness of Jesus' conduct : that He *both* did things in secret, and yet sought to be known openly. *If thou doest these things*. The mode of address indicates a distrust—a suspicion that there is something not as it should be. They were right in their principle, though wrong in their application of it. *Show thyself to the world*. The word “show” is frequent in John, translated also “manifest,” xiv. 22 f., xvii. 6, xxi. 1. Note the fascination which greatness in the world's eye exerts on men.

5. Reason why they spoke so. *Even His own were not believing in Him*. Afterwards they did believe. Those must be excluded, of course, who were then among the twelve apostles, if any. This cross Jesus had to bear—not only forsaken by disciples, but taunted by His relatives. Remark that John, who describes Jesus as the Eternal Word, speaks also of His brethren.

6 f. Christ's answer was to the effect that the world, before which they desired Him to appear in order to gain its applause, hated Him because He bare witness against its evil. That was no reason to avoid its persecution when the call of duty came. It was a reason why He should not go to pay court to it. Meanwhile His time was not yet come. *My time* (cp. ver. 8, “is not yet fulfilled”) ; the word that signifies a fixed, or set, or appointed

7 yet come : but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you ; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the 8 works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast : I go not up 9 yet unto this feast ; for my time is not yet full come. When

time ; an opportunity ; the right, suitable, or convenient time. He means, His time to go up to the feast was not yet come : He would not go with them ; but with a deeper reference, manifestly, to the desire of the brethren that He should show Himself to the world. That was to be done presently, not with the object and not in the manner and not with the result they thought of ; cp. ii. 4, also ver. 30, viii. 20, xii. 23, xiii. 1. Jesus acted according to the Divine plan of His life, which was known to Him. Ambition or love of popularity could not move Him to go before His time ; nor could terror of the end keep Him back when the hour had struck. This knowledge of Jesus added intensity to His earthly discipline. *Your time, etc.* Jesus and they were looking at things from opposite points. To them nothing seemed more delightful than the visit to the holy and beloved metropolis, to the Mount Zion of glory and beauty ; to mingle with friends, acquaintances, fellow-countrymen from all parts of the land and of the world ; to feel one with this vast multitude with common faith, and *such a* faith ; with such a heritage of hallowed memories, and such promises waiting fulfilment. And for Jesus to command the homage of this world was in their opinion the highest distinction earth could afford. The world could do no more for Him. Hence their time was always ready. They could at any hour show themselves to the world ; they were a reflection of its way of thinking, it would see itself in them ; they would raise no questions, would not perplex the world. They are therefore in no danger of disgrace, or persecution, or death who live as all live. *The world cannot hate you ; but me it hates, because I testify, etc.*, cp. xv. 18-25, xvii. 14. Christ came to gain the world for God and righteousness and truth, not for Himself, else He could have conformed to its tendencies and flattered it. Not to be known openly, except by making the world know itself (xvi. 8) ; to show it God's will, and convince it both of its sin and need of God's grace, and to show it the way of redemption. Therefore the world hated—and hates Him. Impurity hates purity ; selfishness, self-sacrifice ; hatred, love ; falsehood, truth. A holy life draws, but it also repels, because it judges unholiness. Darkness hates the light. Christ, and all who are Christ's, bear witness to the evil that is in the world ; evil which will bring eternal separation from God unless destroyed in the world and in the individual soul. The world's history is the world's judgment ; and the cardinal fact of the world's history is its hatred of the Son of God, as shown in the cross. By all His holy life, but especially by that death, Jesus testified of the world's works that they are evil.

8. R.V. *fulfilled*—in A.V. *full come*, shows more plainly what He meant by saying His time was not yet come. His life in every detail was a *fulfilment* of the Divine purpose. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the Alpha and Omega of God's eternal counsels towards man. *I go not up yet unto this feast.* It is disputed whether the correct reading be *not* or *not yet*. R.V. decides for the latter. The charge of vacillation is brought against Christ. Meyer says, “He changed His intention.” How that idea can be reconciled with the distinct knowledge Jesus shows

he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up 11 unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the 12 Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but 13 he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

14. Now, about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the 15 temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How

about His time, it is difficult to see. Godet seems to suggest the right explanation, if the former be the correct reading: "I go not to this feast for the purpose for which you desire me: when the time comes, I shall go to show myself to," etc.

(2.) 10-13. Jesus goes up secretly. He is missed at the beginning of the feast, and various contradictory opinions are expressed about Him.

10. *As it were in secret.* Jesus did not resort to stratagems, but He had a holy care for His life. Possibly He went by the shorter route through Samaria, avoided usually by the Galileans, who went, too, by caravans.

11. *The Jews, i.e. the rulers.* *Where is that fellow?* Their evidently hostile attitude provoked a variety of judgment, though men were too cautious to state openly what they thought; until, at least, the authorities had given their judgment.

12. *He is a good man.* Good, morally excellent, with pure character and honourable motives. *He leads the multitude astray*, implying, on the contrary, moral condemnation. A man may be *good*, though neither wise nor safe. He may cause men to foster hopes which can never be realized. They mean Jesus was a demagogue in the sinister sense.

(3.) 14-24. When the feast was at its height, Jesus suddenly appears in the Temple and begins to teach. The Jews express surprise, no doubt meant to disparage His influence and throw doubt on His doctrine, that a man without proper Rabbinic education should venture to assume the function of a public instructor. Jesus answers that knowledge of the truth of God depends on the state of the affections and will towards God, and that the test of a man's sincerity is his aims. Outward acquaintance with truth did not argue moral subjection to it; as they—the Jews—had the law of Moses and boasted of it, and yet, contrary to the law, were plotting His murder. The multitude, in ignorance, apparently, of the intention of their rulers, calling out that He was possessed with an evil spirit, Jesus continues by alluding to the cause of the hostility against Him, the cure of the impotent man on the Sabbath (ch. v.); and reasons that if Sabbath law is without sin set aside by the rite of circumcision, it cannot justly be held a sin against it to make a paralytic whole. Finally, He exhorts them not to be misled by appearances.

14. The feast lasted for a week. *Went up*: the Temple being on Zion hill.

15. *Marvelled*, but not with the ingenuous wonder which gives birth to faith. A common word in John: iii. 7, iv. 27, v. 20, 28. *Letters*, for that

16 knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that 17 sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether I speak of myself.* 18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no

which letters express—learning; referring to their Rabbinic schools, in which Jesus never studied. *This man:* contemptuously.

16-19. Jesus replies to their insinuation of ignorance, incompetency, falsehood—(1) That His teaching is not His own, but God's. (2) That he who will do God's will can recognise God's teaching. (3) That the aim of the teacher determines the origin of his mission. (4) That, as for them, they have the law of Moses and do not keep it. *My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me.* Jesus claims here, as so often in this Gospel, to have a special Divine mission, and to have received the truth which He taught from God directly; see iii. 34, “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God,” viii. 26, 28, 38, xii. 49, xiv. 10, 24; cp. also viii. 42. *Neither came I of (or from) myself, but He sent me;* cp. vi. 38, “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will,” etc. And yet not so much the desire to claim direct Divine authority, such as no man could have, for the truth He was uttering, as to disclaim self-derived authority, and therefore interested aims. “The Son can do nothing from Himself,” etc., v. 19. The doctrines of the Rabbis were *their own*, called severally by their propounders' names (“Rabbi Jonathan saith,” etc.). Jesus ever spoke of the Father.

17. They might retort: Any one can say that the truth he speaks is God's, and all teachers do so *in fact*; but what is the proof? Jesus therefore gives them a test to apply to His own teaching. *If any one wills to do His will.* The will to obey God implies a power of discrimination between what is of God and what is not. If they were obedient to the truth of God which was in their hands, they could tell *whence* came the truth which Jesus taught them. Obedience to the will of God involves recognition of God as righteous and true, and sympathy with righteousness and truth; cp. iii. 21, “He that doeth truth cometh to the light;” viii. 47, “He that is of God heareth God's words,” and x. 5 and 26 f. Cp. I Cor. ii. 12, 15. It is the power of *moral reason*, not of the *intellect*. The habit of seeking God's will for oneself will enable one to discover in the words and acts of another whether he seeks God's will too or his own. Hence loyalty to conscience, as that is illumined by God's word, becomes a faculty of spiritual discernment. *Or whether I speak from myself* (not of *myself*); the meaning of which He presently explains.

18. To the subjective testimony Jesus adds an objective—*He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory.* The speaker himself is the spring and the aim of his actions. He is self-centred, self-inspired, self-seeking. He will be more anxious to give out utterances that he is proud of as his own, the product of his own thoughts, his own ideas, his own theories and the like, rather than what he has taken pains to verify as the truth of God. And he will aim at personal advantage in doing so, at the praise and admiration which fellow-men will crown him with.

But he that seeks the glory of Him who sent him, v. 44, viii. 50. Observe

19 unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to 20 kill me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: 21 who goeth about to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto 22 them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day cir-

Jesus does not place a general antithesis merely—"But he who does *not* speak from himself seeks the glory of God," or some such statement which we might have expected. Obviously, the thought is on a higher level than this, that Jesus is to be ranked as one of a class of men who do not speak from themselves, and do not therefore seek their own glory. He stands by Himself. It would be truer to say, He is the only one of His class; for all who belong to this class belong to it as having received from Him His own Spirit. Jesus has sought the glory of God as none ever have or can. He is as if the only representative opposed to all who speak from themselves; and so what follows applies to Him as it can never apply to any man on earth besides: *This (one) is true, and unrighteousness in Him there is not.* He rises from the question, whether his teaching be of God or not, to the assertion that He is Himself *personally* true, and absolutely without unrighteousness. His utterances must consequently be the truth; and His actions, governed by His aims, righteous. The word rendered *true* is that which has for its opposite *false* (not the word used in ver. 28, i. 9, xvii. 3, 1 John v. 20, Rev. iii. 7, meaning the ideal completeness of truth opposed to broken partial attempts at it). Jesus therefore asserts that He is personally without falsehood, and without unrighteousness. This is one of those remarkable statements in which our Lord discloses His self-consciousness, viii. 29, 46. Many men have been and are conscious of sincerity in the truth which they have uttered, and in their general action towards their fellow-men. But it is incredible, and it would be ridiculous, that any man, knowing he was only a man, and knowing what as man he was, should say of himself, "*This (one) is true, and no unrighteousness is in him;*" no one would believe him. See 1 John iii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 22; Heb. vii. 26.

19. Jesus now turns round on His calumniators and makes personal application of the principles He has just laid down. So far from *willing* to do God's will, they have His special revelation given through Moses; and not one of them keeps it. *Did not Moses, etc.* Observe Christ's plainness of speech: *Not one of you;* and the contrast with what He has just said of Himself, ver. 18. *Why do ye seek to kill me?* proof that they did not keep the law; see viii. 44, see also viii. 37, 40.

20. *The multitude answered.* Probably many of them from other parts, and ignorant of the plot of the Jewish rulers. *Thou hast a demon,* viii. 48, x. 20; as we say, "*The man is possessed;*" only a possession in a bad sense, suspicious, malignant, etc.

21-24. As the Jews give no answer to Christ's question, He proceeds to deal with the cause of offence—His cure of the impotent man on the Sabbath (ch. v.).

I did one work, v. 17. *Ye all marvel at the doing of it on the Sabbath;* see v. 20, 28. *For this cause Moses has given you the circumcision.* The

23 circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken ; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole 24 on the sabbath day ? Judge not according to the appearance, 25 but judge righteous judgment. Then said some of them of 26 Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill ? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the

rite of circumcision and the miracle of healing were applications of one and the same principle, which is the presenting a man holy and blameless before God ; in body, soul, and spirit making him such as could fitly be in His covenant and kingdom. The circumcision was, like its counterpart baptism, only a symbol of this ; the miracle was more ; so far as the body was affected, it was a perfect realizing of wholeness : yet it, too, was only a symbol of the greater end—the cure of the impotency of the soul, which might or might not follow. “ Go and sin no more ! ” Hence Jesus says that in giving circumcision Moses had essentially the same end in view as He had in giving the impotent man bodily soundness again. The evident deduction from this identity of aim follows presently, ver. 23. *Not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers ; Gen. xvi. 10*,—a parenthesis designed probably, by its greater historical accuracy, to give the dignity of more ancient origin to the usage. Recognising Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, they ascribed to him law, ceremonies, rites, everything distinctive of their position as Jews. Circumcision was performed on the Sabbath whenever it happened to be the eighth day after the birth of the child. Hence this rite was held of greater importance than the observance of the Sabbath ; and justly, as being the sign and seal of covenant with God, as symbol of the most perfect soundness of the whole man, which is alone fitting for the subjects of His favour and fellowship. For the fact that a man should be in covenant with God—right before God—must take precedence of a man’s resting on the Sabbath as God rested. Accordingly, as Jesus has already shown that His miracle of healing ran side by side with the rite of circumcision, had the same end in view, was but a different application of the same principle, it followed that it too was of greater importance than Sabbath observance. Nay, if there were more or less of merit in the two cases, did not His have the greater ? There was but a partialness in the rite of circumcision ; but Jesus had given health to a “ whole man.” *Are ye angry* : the word is stronger—“ wroth,” R.V. Perhaps better, “ Are ye disgusted.”

24. *Judge not by appearance, etc.* ; see viii. 15, “ Ye judge after the flesh,” etc.

(4.) 25-31. The Jerusalem Jews express their surprise that Jesus is allowed to speak so openly, and without molestation. They speculate if the rulers have recognised Him to be the Christ.

25 f. *Some of the men of Jerusalem.* Observe the careful distinction between these and the “ people ” of ver. 20. They knew the plot of the rulers. *Openly, R.V., boldly, A.V., vers. 13, 14. Are the rulers then really aware that this man is the Christ ?* Observe the thrice-repeated “ this man ” with something of disparagement.

26 f. They decide against the Christship of Jesus because they know His origin ; cp. vi. 42. Messiah’s origin was regarded as wrapt in obscurity. The mystery was part of His glory. They could not have meant by this that

27 rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no 28 man knoweth whence he is. Then cried Jesus in the temple, as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is 29 true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from

the birthplace would be unknown, see vers. 41, 42, more probably the parentage; but most probably it was one of those sayings expressive of the mystery which was felt to be attached to the Messiah, and His appearance as the people's deliverer; derived partly, though unconsciously perhaps, from the contradictory prophecies of the Old Testament; and partly, and consciously, from their own thoughts about Him. That the Christ should be the son of some common father and mother whom everybody knew, seemed incredible, even before they knew of the historic Jesus of Nazareth. That He should be the eternal Son of God was a stage beyond their conceptions. Cp. Mal. iii. 1; Isa. lxiv. 1; llii. 8 (though different in R.V.); Micah v. 2. It was a tradition among the Jews that the Messiah, though born in Bethlehem, should remain unknown until Elijah came and revealed Him to Himself and to His people. The former objection to Jesus turned on His moral character, ver. 12. That surmounted, the homeliness of His antecedents presents another barrier to faith. They know all about Him.

28 f. The answer of Jesus. *Cried*; so ver. 37, implying a large audience on both occasions, and deep emotion on Christ's part. *Ye both know me, and know whence I am.* Jesus seems to put a higher meaning on their words than the Jews intended them to bear. But when He proceeds to say that they do *not* know Him who sent Him, He may rather be taken to mean that their knowledge of Himself extends to nothing but the mere outside acquaintance with Him and with the reputed facts of His parentage, and so on. Knowing only this, they really know nothing.

From [or of] myself I have not come; cp. ver. 17. Jesus is no more the originator of His mission to them than of the words which He speaks or the works which He does; see ver. 16 f., viii. 28, 40, iii. 34, v. 19, 30. *But He is the True One who sent me.* "True," i.e. ideally, completely so, the True One who sends; see on ver. 18, one who has the right to send; the Real Sender; the source of all missions among men. *Whom ye do not know.* A terrible condemnation. For if they knew the True One, they would recognise the truth in His Messenger. Not to know the True One argued themselves untrue. *I know Him*; cp. x. 15. The words for *know* are different in Greek. In this passage it is the word that signifies perfect, absolute knowledge, the *knowledge of reflection*; in the other it is the word that signifies *knowledge of perception*. (Aristotle uses them together, thus: It is hard to *perceive* if he *knows* or not. Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon*, under γιγνώσκω.) Both words are used in viii. 55 by Jesus Himself; the word of less intensity applied to the Jews, that of greater to Himself. In Matt. xi. 27, "no man knoweth the Son but the Father," the word is a compound of the latter, which is also used by Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, "Then shall I know even," etc. The knowledge of God claimed by Jesus therefore is perfect; and although this is a knowledge which must depend less on the power and opportunity of observation than on moral and spiritual sympathy

30 him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him : but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet 31 come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done ?

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things

(cp. ver. 18, “The same is true,” etc.), yet it is remarkable that the grounds on which Jesus rests this absolute knowledge of the True One are these :—(1) *I am from Him*; and (2) *He sent me*. (1) *I am from being with Him*: lit. (not, observe, the same Greek preposition as in ver. 28, I have not come from myself); by which words Jesus claims pre-existence with God, and therefore such a relation of oneness with Him in nature as to justify this great claim to know Him, i. 18, iii. 13. This then is His origin. And (2) *He sent me*. The nature of His mission and the fact of it point back to the source of it. Jesus emphasizes His unity with God, and at the same time His complete dependence on God. The former is proved by the latter, as implied in ver. 18 ; see viii. 14.

30 f. The growing disbelief and faith, side by side. Some seek to lay hands on Him. *His hour*, etc. ; see ii. 4, viii. 20. The reason, according to Meyer, was “higher religious apprehension of the history, not excluding immediate cause. . . . The threads on which the outward history of Jesus runs, and by which it is guided, unite in the counsels of God.” Some go the length of giving it as their opinion that if He is not the Christ, the Christ Himself will not evidence greater power. *Of the multitude many believed on Him*. Even though their belief was not as yet intellectual, or what it ought to be, as indeed it could not, their moral attitude to Him was enough to warrant them being called believers. They did not suffer prejudices or appearances to interfere with their judgment. So they are led on by the Spirit of God. Those who felt and said Jesus was a good man, now openly saying that they could not imagine the Christ when He came a greater personality. “With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward,” Ps. xviii. 26. Their question implies an answer in the negative, which shows that their faith was that of conviction.

(5.) 32-44. The Sanhedrim send their officers to arrest Jesus in consequence of what they considered the dangerous views spreading in His favour among the people. Jesus continues His teaching, of which two chief points are given—(1) His statement that He would be with them only for a little while ; and then (2) on the last day of the feast His invitation to all athirst to come to Him and drink. Each of these produced a profound impression on the hearers.

32. *Murmuring these things*. The doubt expressed whether the actual Christ would be a greater man, though indicating the caution of the people, in case of exposure to the censure of the rulers, was sufficiently alarming.

The chief priests and the Pharisees, i.e. the *Sadducees* and *Pharisees*, to which former party the priests as a class belonged (John never uses the designation “*Sadducees*”), of whom the Sanhedrim consisted, see on i. 19. *Officers* ; xviii. 3.

concerning him ; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent
 33 officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little
 while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.
 34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me* : and where I am,
 35 *thither* ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among them-
 selves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him ? will
 36 he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the
 Gentiles ? What *manner of* saying is this that he said, Ye

33 f. These words of Jesus were doubtless spoken in hearing of the officers, and their peculiar motive may be partly attributed to this fact. *Yet a little while*, etc., viii. 21. The words connect with the previous declarations of Jesus at vers. 28, 29 about Himself, as having come from the Real One who sent Him. In a little while He will return to Him, viii. 14, xvi. 28. Jesus does not speak of God as His Father in this chapter, as in v. and vi., simply as He who sent Him ; it was the origin of His mission which was in question. Jesus knows that His death at the hands of these men is coming, —knows, however, it is not yet. *You shall seek me, and not find me.* The tragic history of the Jewish people since their rejection of Jesus as Christ is condensed into these words. *I am.* Less a place than an eternal condition of union and communion with God, i. 18. *His* seeking of them would be changed into *their* seeking of Him. *Where I am, ye cannot come* ; see viii. 22 ff. for explanation of this in Christ's own words. The impossibility was moral. They could not, because they would not.

35 f. Comment of the Jews (the hostile party) on this mysterious declaration, couched evidently in sarcastic surprise. Did they not understand by "Him that sent me"—God? *The dispersion of the Greeks.* The Jews (still so by descent and faith) residing in other lands than their own, and for whom their native-born countrymen had something of contempt. They mean, Failing with us, will He try the dispersion ? *And teach the Greeks, i.e.* try to make disciples of the Gentiles themselves ? The question expects a negative answer. This name, "The dispersion," originated after the return from the exile, and was applied to those who settled in Babylon, though it came to include also the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel ; cp. Jas. i. 1, "to the twelve tribes in the dispersion ;" and 1 Pet. i. 1, "to the elect sojourners of the dispersion." For evidence of the width of the geographical range, see Acts ii. 9 f. As Greek language and Greek ideas were the current coin of the civilised world, East and West, the name "Greek" was synonymous with "Gentile." A Jew of the dispersion, though of necessity in contact with liberalizing opinions, and unable to conform to Mosaic precepts, so far as the local and ceremonial went, might yet be as zealous for the traditions of the fathers, and of all the narrow policy of the Jews, as the Pharisees themselves. But as the more liberal party, men like Stephen, belonged to their synagogues, the contempt of which the present question is an instance is intelligible. It is a singular example of the way in which an unconscious prophecy may be uttered even by a foe ; for the dispersion, accustoming the heathen to the truths of Divine revelation, and making many proselytes to their faith, was one of the most remarkable preparations of the ways of the Lord—in the preaching of the gospel. *What word is this*, etc. The saying haunts them, though they pretend to ridicule it.

shall seek me, and shall not find *me* : and where I am, *thither*
 37 ye cannot come? In the last day, that great *day* of the feast,
 Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come
 38 unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture
 hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on

37 f. *On the last, the great day of the feast*; “on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you,” Lev. xxiii. 36. *Cried*; see on ver. 28 and xii. 44. *If any man thirst*, etc. The occasion of this gracious call was, it is generally thought, the ceremony of drawing water from the pool of Siloam, for which a grand procession of priests and people was formed. The water, drawn in a golden pitcher, was solemnly poured out before the Lord in the Temple, amid the joyous acclamation of the crowds, and was understood to be a memorial of the Lord’s giving water to the Israelites in the wilderness.¹ See 1 Sam. vii. 6; Isa. xii. 3. But Christ needed no mere occasion for giving so free and universal an invitation. The fact that the feast was about to close; that immediately the multitude would be scattered each to his home and country; that it was now or never for many of them; and that many were spiritually groping for some true object and hope,—is sufficient reason for His urgency and earnestness. The great spiritual truths implied have already been set forth in connection with similar statements of Christ, ch. iv. 10, 13 f., vi. 35. There is here, perhaps, conspicuous the absolute sufficiency of Christ for all human need; an appeal to universal consciousness; so Rev. xxii. 17, xxi. 6; cp. Isa. lv. 1, xli. 17 ff., xliv. 3. Not so much what Christ can give, as in the previous passages; as that He does give whatever men need. The reception of the Holy Spirit is the immersion of the human nature into the Divine. Then there is the additional thought that the receiver from Christ’s fulness becomes in his turn a giver to others, and with the same liberality as he has himself been blessed with. Grace overflows; cp. iv. 14. To “come to Christ” and to “believe in Him” are the same act. To drink is the effect of faith or of coming. The unlimited range of need; the personal application to a personal Christ; the free access to Him; the certainty of being satisfied, both in conscience, mind, and heart; a certainty that is confirmed not only in his own personal experience, but in the believer’s power of blessing as he has been himself blessed, 2 Cor. iv. 13,—all these are set forth. *As the Scripture hath said*: see Isa. lviii. 11; Jer. xxxi. 12; cp. Joel ii. 28; Ps. xlvi. 3. No explicit O. T. passage bears this on the face of it; it is rather the gist of many promises combined. *Rivers*, with the plentifullness emphatic. The Spirit is often symbolized as water; see iii. 5.

39. The evangelist’s comment on Christ’s enigmatical saying. *Of the Spirit*, etc. John could look at his Master’s words through the aid of the gift of the Spirit, as it was intended he should. “He will bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,” xiv. 26. The Holy Spirit became not merely the personal source within them of enlightenment and comfort to the disciples, but also the source of their power and ability to

¹ That this was intermittent on the last day may be deemed as giving a finer edge to Christ’s words.

him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, 41 said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

preach Christ to their fellow-men. *The Spirit was not yet.* Apparently the most trustworthy reading. John refers, of course, to the free and universal outpouring of the Spirit on all believers in Jesus Christ, begun in outward symbol at Pentecost, and continuing ever since, Eph. i. 13 f. Not that the Spirit was non-existent before, and not that there was absolutely no manifestation of Him hitherto. The statement is a relative one. *For Jesus was not yet glorified.* The connection between the death and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, as cause and effect, is a truth which Christ in this gospel otherwise pointedly asserts, xvi. 7, cp. xx. 22. *Glorified.* The end to which all the earthly course of the Lord, reached only through the sufferings and death, was pointing, was "the glory I had with Thee before the world was," xvii. 5, see xi. 4, xii. 16, 23, 27 f., xiii. 31 f., xvii. 1; Heb. ii. 9. This is John's characteristic way of viewing, and of representing Christ as viewing, the end. The death was lost in the glory beyond. Why the gift of the Spirit is bound up with the death and resurrection of Christ is a question touching the whole circumference of Christ's atoning work. "We cannot separate the merits of Christ's death from the fulness of grace bestowed by Him in His state of exaltation. It is through mystical union with the living Christ that the believer receives the blessings purchased through the atoning death" (Edwards on *1 Cor.* p. 255). Communion with God, broken by sin, is restored by the Son of man dying and rising; and made possible for all who by faith are made one with Him. In Him they are made nigh—reconciled through His blood. God, as an indwelling, spiritual, personal Presence then becomes theirs; the source in them of life, light, love, holiness, power. "The Spirit," therefore, stands as watchword for the whole of this N. T. economy; see *2 Cor.* iii. 7 ff. He is the Spirit of Sonship, of Christ, of promise, of grace; the earnest of the inheritance.

40-44. The profound impression produced by Christ's words on the multitude, again a twofold one as before, vers. 12 f., 25 f., 31. Some declare in His favour with more or less enthusiasm. Others refuse to believe that a Galilean can be the Christ, and some of them try to seize Him.

The prophet. See on i. 21. *The Christ.* Mark the culmination of belief. *Does the Christ come out of Galilee?* etc. Mark the culmination of unbelief, taking refuge in any textual difficulty to ward off the power of the truth from conscience. Driven from their positions that He deceived the people, and that He failed in convincing proofs of Divine mission respectively, they fell back on exegetical difficulties. "At least," they would say, "he is from Galilee; and hath not the Scripture said? etc. There is no getting over that fact, which is conclusive, if Scripture is to be reverenced as true." Why might not Jesus easily have put them right in so small a matter? Because they were finding an excuse in Scripture, not going to Scripture for light. Would they believe the word of Jesus about His birthplace if they did not believe His word about anything else? if they were not impressed with these words and recognised in them the proof of a Divine source? Men who have to retreat from untenable ground against their will, will yet grasp

42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David
 43 was? So there was a division among the people because of
 44 him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man
 laid hands on him.

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. 47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? 49 But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed.

at some literal shred or other to save their self-respect. No doubt there did exist a difficulty in this apparent contradiction. But Jesus had already suggested the solvent for every such perplexity, ver. 17. How often men have used the same argument, *Hath not the Scriptures said?* etc., and with convincing force! And yet time has shown that they really did not comprehend the width of Scripture truth; that they read into it their own narrow notions; or at any rate time has shown that what Scripture did say, even if it did say precisely as they understood it, it did not say against the opinions, or the man, to which or to whom they were opposed. Are we to defer going to Christ to satisfy our spiritual thirst, in response to His loving call, until we have settled some miserable objection of this kind; or shall we yield to His power and grace and truth and accept Him—objections and all? *No man laid hands on Him*; so ver. 30. “Letting I dare not wait upon I would.” A holy and Divine fence seemed to ward off those who harboured ill-designs against Christ’s person. Cp. xviii. 6. It was the power of goodness, the dignity of moral character, and *something more*.

(6.) 45-52. Return of the officers sent by the Sanhedrim.

45 f. *Therefore the officers came*, etc., i.e. as the consequence of what is said in ver. 44. *Never mortal spake like this.* They ventured to express no theory about Jesus, they simply and emphatically tell the impression His words made on them; which was such that they felt His personality unique, and they were rendered morally unable to arrest Him. In one sense the evangelist intends this effect of Christ’s words to be the most striking of the whole, disarming men of hostile intention.

47-49. The angry retort of the Pharisees, the party who seem to have taken the lead in this matter. *Are ye too led astray?* The question implies a negative answer, as does the following one. *Has any one of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?* As put by this latter party, this question makes the difference between the two great parties very distinct; the Sadducees or priests being *par excellence* the “rulers,” most of the members of the Sanhedrim belonging to that class. So that the precise force of the question comes out if we render the last clause in this way: “Or even of the Pharisees, the party of strict orthodoxy.” As servants of the Sanhedrim it was not their business to have convictions different from their masters, between whom, notwithstanding their important differences on other points, there was the most perfect harmony on this at least.

This multitude, which knows not the law. The negation is not absolute but

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night,
 51 being one of them,) Doth our law judge *any* man, before it
 52 hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and
 said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look:
 53 for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went
 unto his own house.

CHAP. VIII. 1, 2. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives. And
 conditioned: "in so far as they know not the law." *Are accursed.* Note
 the spiritual arrogance of these men. They called the unlettered, "the
 people of the land," and "worms." It was intolerable to them that their
 own officials should be inclined to take the multitude's opinion, when they,
 the men of learning, of piety, of position, were unanimous against Jesus.
 Claiming to be the spiritual guides of the people, they despised them. This
 was not the temper of a true shepherd; see x. 1.

50-52. Their fierce rejoinder to the quiet remonstrance of one of their
 number. One protest is given on behalf of reason and justice and truth; one
 solitary voice is lifted up from the midst of the Sanhedrim—the voice of
 Nicodemus. Cp. iii. 21. He was doing truth and coming to the light. *He
 that came to Him before, being one of them*, so R.V. *Doth our law judge a
 man?* etc. Nicodemus wishes to remind them that they, the spiritual
 judges of the people, are guilty of *prejudice* in the extremest form. "Even
 you," he says, "are you keeping the law you know?" They have never had
 Jesus at their judgment bar; never formally accused Him; never heard what
 He had to say in defence; never carefully sifted the reports of His actions;
 and yet they have already in their own minds tried and condemned Him,
 and indulge in bitter invectives at those who take a different view. It was a
 modest but powerful appeal to their sense of fairness and to their position as
 spiritual rulers, to which they were untrue. An open impartial examination
 of Jesus, with free rights of witnesses in favour, was one of the very last
 things they desired. They were afraid of Jesus, and they were afraid of the
 rough sense of justice in the people. The reasonableness of this remonstrance
 and its obvious justice exasperated them, and they turned on Nicodemus to
 vent their rage and disappointment on him. *Art thou also of Galilee?* The
 rudest, perhaps, and most contemptuous remark they could have made to
 one who was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. His sympathies must be
 with Galilee, they imply, else he would not have ventured even to interpose
 as he did for one who claimed to be a prophet and yet was a Galilean. It is
 striking that here there is no other objection brought against Jesus than this
 which rests on His supposed birthplace. It is a foregone conclusion which
 forecloses every evidence Jesus could give of Divine origin and claims. It
 was a short and easy method of silencing Nicodemus.

They further imply that He is ignorant of the Scriptures. *Search, and
 see that*, etc. *Search*, the same word used by Christ, v. 39. Read
 either "Search, and look; for," etc., or "Search, and see that," etc.
 It was not a fact that no prophet came from Galilee. Jonah did, and others
 may.

53-viii. 11, called the **Pericope**. 53. *And—house.* The Sanhedrim broke
 up without having come to any decision on the matter. viii. 1. *Jesus—
 Olives*; cp. Luke xxi. 37, after which verse some would insert this
 passage in Luke's Gospel because of the apparent connection. 2. *And—*

early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. So, when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

them. The word for “early” in Greek is not that used by John otherwise. 3. *And—midst.* *Scribes and Pharisees*: a combination not in this Gospel besides, though often in the Synoptics. John never speaks of the scribes. 4 f. *They say—thou?* For the Old Testament legislation on such cases, see Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22 ff. 6. *This—not.* *Tempting Him*: hoping either to set His well-known mercifulness against the severity of the old economy, or to entangle Him in a political web; the *jus gladii* not now belonging to the Jews; cp. Matt. xxii. 15 ff. Jesus, who would not act the part of a judge in men’s matters (Luke xii. 14), and knowing the insidious character of the question, at first declined to answer; it was not His part to interfere. The gesture is one of self-absorption or embarrassment (not applicable here), or of intentional neglect. The words in italics, *as though He heard them not*, should be omitted. 7 f. *So—ground.* The eyewitnesses, according to the Old Testament law, should first cast stones at the condemned; but here Jesus substitutes a new and striking qualification: “Let the sinless among you throw the first stone.” Cp. Rom. ii. 1, 22 f. If such a maxim were to be acted on in courts of justice, no justice could be done. But the question being put to Jesus as a private person, He was perfectly entitled to answer it from such an ethical point of view. The term “without sin” may be reasonably limited to sins of unchastity. 9. *And they—midst.* The words, *being convicted by their own conscience*, are omitted in R.V. *From the eldest*: a true touch. The state of morality among the Rabbins was low. 10 f. *When Jesus—more.* R.V. omits: *And saw none but the woman; also, those thine accusers.* Was the Lord too lenient? A woman of ordinary feeling in such a position would hardly be in need of much rebuke.

Jesus could safely leave that to her own conscience. If the recollection of His gracious way with her did not avail to keep her in the path of virtue thenceforth, nothing in this world would. And the fact that she remained standing in His presence, when all her accusers were gone, and nothing hindered her also from stealing away to hide her shame, seems to prove that her conscience was at work, and repentance truly begun. We cannot doubt it resulted in faith and purity.

The generally received opinion about this passage may be summed up in a sentence: That it is an authentic incident from the life of our Lord, but that it does not belong to the Gospel of John. It was not received as part of the book till at least the fourth century; and all the oldest MSS., with one exception, are without it. Further, the style and language are evidently different from those of the Gospel into which it has found its way. But the representation made in it of Jesus, when placed by His enemies in the embarrassing situation, is such as could hardly have been imagined, and yet is in true consistency with the Gospel record. The striking scene when, as Augustine (who zealously defends the authenticity) puts it, the *misera* stood alone before the *misericordia*, is sketched from life.

END OF VOLUME I.



1 1012 01148 8568

Date Due

F 29 '40

